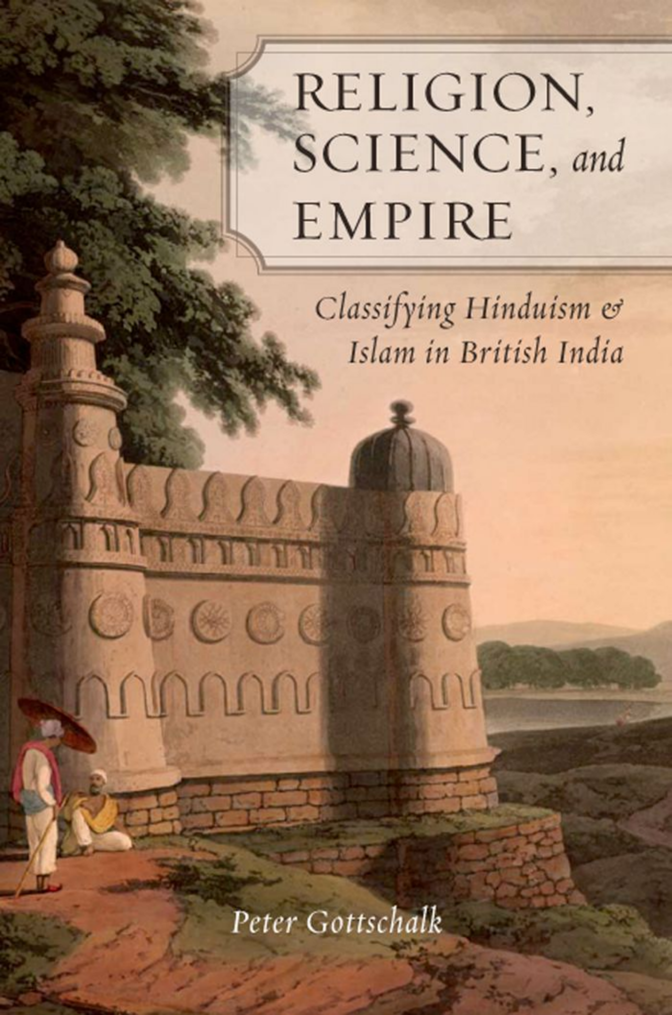

# RELIGION, SCIENCE, *and* EMPIRE

## *Classifying Hinduism & Islam in British India*

Peter Gottschalk

RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND EMPIRE

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# Religion, Science, and Empire

## CLASSIFYING HINDUISM AND ISLAM IN BRITISH INDIA

*Peter Gottschalk*

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While the border line between tribal religions and some aspects of Hinduism is not at all easy to draw, it is often just as hard to define it between Hinduism and Islam and even between Hinduism and Christianity, in the case of a number of intermediate sects which offer points of identity with both.
—T. C. HODSON (1937)

What are the men of science doing in these days?... From a mass induction of varied phenomena, a huge mass of facts and figures, they evolve, by processes of generalization and classification, the unity of force and cause. To resolve multiplicity into unity, many into one, is science.
—KESHUB CHUNDER SEN (1881)

Science, which is in England a calm pursuit, is to our countrymen in the East an instrument of empire.
—WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER (1887)

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*This book is dedicated to the memory of the late Sylvia Campbell*
*and to all my other teachers*

*especially*

Wendy Doniger

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*"Learning, in the book, is not learning"*—Sanskrit proverb quoted by *Jonnalagada Prabhakara Sastry*

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## *Term Glossary*

In order to maintain a level of accessibility, I have not included diacritics in the main text. Those wishing transliterated versions of the terms used can find these below and in the index. This book primarily relies upon vernacular pronunciations of Hindi, Urdu, and Bhojpuri words. This often omits the final "a" vowel found in many Sanskrit words, so *Ramayana* is rendered *Ramayan* to reflect common local usage. A pronunciation guide is provided for each term, unless it is pronounced as spelled.

*adhyapak—adhyāpak*; teacher.
Adivasi—*ādivāsī*; "original inhabitant"; synonym for "tribal."
*ashraf—ashrāf*; the collection of Saiyids, Shaikhs, Pathans, and Mughal communities.
*baradari—barādarī*; "brotherhood"; a Muslim group of high social status that includes Shaikhs, Saiyids, Pathans, and Mughals.
*basti—bastī*; a neighborhood of a village.
*bhadralok*—"respectable people"; elite Bengalis.
*brahm*—a vengeful ghost of a Brahman.
*dargah—dargāh*; "court" or "place of the door"; tomb-shrine of a venerated Sufi.
*gali*—alley.
*gotra*—exogamous caste sub-division.
guru—teacher; spiritual guide.
*idgah—'īdgāh*; a walled enclosure dedicated to Muslim communal worship on the occasion of the two Id holidays.
*jagir—jāgīr*; a land holding.

*jat, jati, zat—jāt, jāti, zāt*; caste.

*ling; linga—liṅg; liṅga*; a phallic-shaped representation of the god Shiv.

madrasa—a school; can refer to any of a variety of types of schools run by Muslims or, sometimes, to a school in general.

*maktab*—a writing school, a primary school.

maulvi—*maulvī*; learned man; scholar of Islamic law.

*mauza—mauzā*; a surveyed and defined parcel of land, often named after the main village positioned upon it.

*mela—melā*; festival or celebration.

miyanji—*miyāṅjī*; schoolmaster.

*munshi—munshī*; secretary, interpreter.

*murti*—devotional sculpture.

*nawab—nawāb*; a provincial governor of the Mughal empire.

pardah—the exclusion of women from public.

*pargana—parganā*; sub-district.

*patwari—paṭvārī*; registrar of the land accounts of a village.

*patshala—pāṭhśālā*; Sanskrit-medium school.

*qanungo—qānūngo*; chief registrar of land.

sati—the immolation of a widow on her deceased husband's funeral pyre, presumably of her own will.

shaikh—*shai<u>kh</u>*; a revered older man; a group claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad.

*sircar—sarkār*; a province or revenue division.

*subah—sūba*; a Mughal province.

*tol*—a Sanskrit-medium primary school.

*thana—thānā*; police station or police district; also area of land defined for revenue purposes.

*tola—ṭolā*; a neighborhood of a village.

*yoni*—vessel-like symbolic representation of the goddess which often provides a base for a Shiv

zamindar—*zamīndār*; one who farms land; the holder of an estate.

zanana—*zanāna*; the living quarters of women in Indian houses large enough to facilitate gender separation.

# *Place Glossary*

Place names used in the book reflect the forms most commonly used at the end of British rule. Their post-independence equivalents are provided below. Use of the term "Bihar" should be understood to refer to the portion of the presidency and province of Bengal to which it belonged until 1912, and not to the district formerly of that name unless so noted. Similarly, use of the term "Bengal" refers to the presidency and province of that name, and not to the region occupied primarily by speakers of Bangla, which Britons referred to as "Lower Bengal" or "Bengal proper."

Arrah—Ara.
Benares—Varanasi; Kashi.
Behar—Bihar province; a former district south of Patna; another spelling for Bihar.
Bengal—Both a presidency and a province. As a presidency, it included the Lower Provinces and Upper Provinces.
Bengal proper—Lower Bengal; the components of the Bengal presidency and province that now constitute Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal.
Bihar—A province that was part of Bengal until 1912. From then until 1935, this province was conjoined with Orissa. In 2000, Bihar's eastern districts separated to become Jharkhand. Also, for a while, the name of a district under British rule.
Bombay—Mumbai.
Calcutta—Kolkata.
Ganges—Ganga.
Lower Bengal—*See* Bengal proper.

Lower Provinces—The provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa in the Bengal Presidency.

Madras—Chennai.

Monghyr—Munger.

North-Western Provinces—N-WP; included the regions from Benares to Punjab, including Oudh; renamed United Provinces in 1901.

North West Frontier Province—NWFP; situated in the northern regions of the Hindu Kush Mountains.

Oudh—Awadh.

Shahabad—Established as a *zillah* sometime in the sixteenth century, this district included the present-day districts of Kaimur, Rohtas, Buxar, and Bhojpur.

United Provinces—The North-Western Provinces, renamed in 1901.

Upper Provinces—The provinces of the Bengal Presidency northwest from Bihar that came to include Benares, Oudh, Delhi, and Rohilkhand.

RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND EMPIRE

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It is a familiar experience that the ordinary untraveled European on first arriving in India, finds much difficulty in distinguishing one native of the country from another. To his untrained eye all Indians are black; all have the same cast of countenance; and all, except the "decently naked" labouring classes, wear loose garments which revive dim memories of the attire of the Greeks and Romans. An observant man soon shakes off these illusions, and realises the extra ordinary diversity of the types which are to be met with everywhere in India. The first step in his education is to learn to tell a Hindu from a Muhammadan. A further stage is reached when it dawns upon him that the upper classes of Hindus are much fairer than the lower and that their features are moulded on finer lines . . . He learns, in short, to distinguish what may be called the Provincial types of the people of India, the local, racial or linguistic aggregates, which at first sight seem to correspond to the nations of Europe. But the general impression thus formed, though accurate enough so far as they go, are wanting in scientific precision.

—T. C. HODSON, *India. Census Ethnography, 1901–1931* (1937), 9.

# Introduction

HODSON'S STATEMENT NEATLY summarizes one common British approach to knowing Indians that this book seeks to investigate. On the one hand, it suggests that for many Britons, their very first impression of Indians was of categorical difference: their black skin, in contrast with his white skin. On the other hand, the experienced, attentive Briton first learns to differentiate not according to race, but according to religion. Although racial categories are expected to be almost intuitively apparent, religious categories are the most important learned difference. Moreover, despite some initial parallels with Europe, deeper differences surface with greater understanding: an understanding facilitated by a precision only attributable to science. Written by an author with both academic and government standing, included in a government report regarding the annual census, and published only a decade before the termination of British rule in South Asia, Hodson's comment encapsulates conclusions that seemed only commonsense to most Britons, both on and off the subcontinent, throughout most of the period of British Indian rule. Despite the awareness of counterexamples stemming from personal and administrative experience, authors continued throughout the Raj to repeat the assumptions regarding the essentially religious character of Indians and the mutual exclusivity between Hindu and Muslim communities. As not only a former Indian civil servant but also as a member of the Folklore Society and fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Hodson's perspectives fed into a coalescing,

global matrix of knowledge known simply as *science*. The geographically expansive and historically pervasive quality of these imperial and epistemological strands can entangle even a child raised half a century after the decline of the empire.

Indeed, recently, while I was viewing a Patna Museum exhibit of the nineteenth century landscape art of William and Thomas Daniell, two children passed through the gallery. One picture caught the attention of the eldest, Shankari, and she read the name "Mundeswari" aloud from the painting's caption. A few minutes later, Shankari and her sister returned to show their parents the image of the familiar, ancient temple standing near their home, in the neighborhood of my field site. They all took several moments to consider the image, coupling its representation of the temple to personal experiences of their own visits there. The dedication of an entire room in Bihar's premier museum to two English artists demonstrates the degree to which British representations—often hailed for their "scientific" accuracy—remain influential, if not authoritative, in how many Indians view their past. Shankari is likely to again encounter these representations as she gets older and, depending on her affluence and opportunities, probably will find their effect in the books of her university library, in online searches, and during future visits to certain tourist and pilgrimage sites.

Such representational influences from the Raj do not impact only South Asians. Indeed, a half world away from the Patna Museum, another child encountered one of these influences. In addition to *pajama*, *shampoo*, *thug*, and the other invisibly Indian words I learned growing up in the United States was *Daniel Zebra*. Well, that was my ten-year-old's Anglicized version of the name of a particular Indian fish. The pet store where I bought mine undoubtedly advertised them as Zebra Danios, though it probably didn't explain the origin of this popular fish's name. While the bold blue stripes along the silvery, minnow-sized fish makes apparent enough the origin of the "Zebra" part of the name, the "Danio" bit requires more historical depth than offered by most pet shops. Two centuries earlier, in the cause of hobby and science, a British servant of the East India Company by the name of Francis Buchanan identified this type of fish as *Cyprinus danio*. Following his usual practice for specimens not yet classified scientifically, he borrowed the local inhabitants' name for the fish (or at least what he discerned this to be): the Bangla *dhani*. Buchanan's influence would follow me when, decades later, as I prepared for my first visit to the Bihari villages that would comprise my field site, I read what I could find on the region in the library of Banaras Hindu University (BHU). A logical place to start seemed the latest district gazetteer, a massive tome written in 1966 by government officer P. C. Roy Chaudhury. Throughout its nearly thousand pages, the gazetteer quoted Buchanan who, when not labeling fish, did the first British systematic foot survey of Bengal and Bihar. Buchanan's descriptions of Bihar have remained the touchstone for almost all historical descriptions of the region, repeated in publications and websites long after India's independence. In the same library, I viewed the Daniells' images of Mundeshwari and my field site for the first time, in a book written by Mildred Archer, wife of a former British district officer in Bihar.

Although interregional contact, trade, and intellectual exchange have flourished for millennia, an unparalleled epistemic order now dominates the globe. The European empires that simultaneously existed between the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries slowly forged a hegemonic intellectual system that suffuses much, if not most, of the planet in the twenty-first century. Despite the inherent economic, political, and military conflicts that pervaded the shifting alliances among the European empires, intellectual orthodoxies developed that standardized measurement systems, data collection, information processing, and knowledge communication. These orthodoxies not only structured the intellectual lives of the imperialists but also influenced the imperially dominated, many of whom privileged the new episteme over previously existing ones, often to the occlusion of pre-European forms of knowledge. Since the fifteenth century, a system of knowledge has been in development in Europe that would form a matrix of interrelated disciplines used not only by Europeans to understand, exploit, and control non-Europeans, but also by non-Europeans to understand and control their own societies, and by others while resisting European power. This matrix formed, and continues to represent, a keystone in the Western hegemony that exists today, albeit in an altered form. Not only was this matrix instrumental in establishing Western-originated disciplines in non-Western societies, but it also served to globally communicate information about those societies and their cultures generated by imperial and colonial practitioners of those disciplines. So, for instance, the text referenced by various names—such as *al-kitab* ("the Book")—in different Muslim cultures, slowly came to be known uniformly as "the Quran" through British scholarship and Indian Muslim writing. Moreover, although the term *Hindu* had appeared in ancient Persian, Greek, and Arab texts, the term *Hinduism* came into being only in the crucible of British–South Asian interactions on the subcontinent in the late eighteenth century. And, yes, a boy in New Jersey called his fish tank favorites Daniel Zebras, Anglicizing a name (*Danio*) that was itself a Latinized version of the Bangla term *dhani*, which a British hobbyist adapted in the name of science.

Of all the ingredients that contributed to this epistemic matrix, the notion of science probably stands as the most salient. To growing audiences around the world, the term connoted method, system, quantification, empiricism, precision, and objectivity. Hence, it is not surprising that Buchanan and the Daniells should have figured repeatedly throughout my experiences of Bihar, given the status of the former as the first to "statistically" survey the erstwhile province and the reputation of the latter as artists whose work evinced empirical accuracy. The scientific attributes ascribed to them made these men—and many other British authors, artists, cartographers, and statisticians—authoritative reporters on Indian religions as well, especially because audiences viewed their faithfulness to "science" as central to their ability to classify and compare the Indians whom they encountered.

Another consequence of the increasing reverence for science among Europeans can be glimpsed in their gradually polarizing perspective toward religion and science, creating a binary unknown in the medieval period. Not only would science be increasingly privileged

for the understanding of the natural and human worlds, entire societies would be compared, classified, and ranked according to their "scientific" (or, negatively, "religious") character. For many, though certainly not all, Britons, if science served as an emblem of their progressively secularizing society, then Hindu-Muslim violence represented the demerits of an India burdened with a surfeit of religion. Ironically, through the application of scientific models of classification in their projects to understand and administer South Asia, Britons helped to deepen the differences and enmities that their earliest reports had exaggerated. Perspectives such as Hodson's came to be more common not only among Britons, but among Indians as well, seemingly affirmed by the conclusions of science. Meanwhile, religion and science developed as perceived domains of equally exclusive ideals, praxes, goals, institutions, and authorities. In a way, one cannot understand the several globalized, twenty-first-century notions of religion or science without considering the mutually imbricated histories of their codependent coalescence.

In eighteenth-century Europe, there was no such thing as a systematic, empirical study of religion or the secular, comparative study of religion. Globally, few cultures even had a word that remotely resembled what we term in English today *religion*. By the twentieth century, not only had a discipline described variously as "the history of religion" and "comparative religious studies" been established, but the term *religion* now had vernacular cousins throughout the world. Some of these had developed to meet political concerns, some represented a reflection of the changes in indigenous cultures, but most arose in the context of European political imperialism, economic control, and cultural hegemony. Although history had seen transcontinental social changes and vast intellectual hegemonies before—for instance in the Abbasid Mediterranean—none matched the impact of European expansion that created the globalization still unfolding today. For better or for worse—or perhaps both—the empirical study of religions owes its nascence to that globalizing order. To understand this discipline, it must be considered in the context of this history, which involves not only the universalization of the concept of religion but also the standardization of the set of disciplines the world now identifies collectively as "science." This history necessarily unfolds in the context of coalescing forms of knowledge such as historiography, ethnography, ethnology, demographics, and folklore studies that served as the vehicles for understanding religion before the establishment of the secular study of religion.

In an effort to illustrate how these dynamically integrated notions of religion and science shaped British representations of Indians and themselves, this book focuses on how Britons came to know and portray one set of villages. More specifically, it demonstrates how specific themes pervaded British and Indian paintings, statistics, historiographies, ethnologies, and photographs produced of the Bihari village of Chainpur and its neighbors over two centuries. While British rule did not result in a unified image of these villages and their environs—the British Indian government was hardly monolithic in its control of representations, either by its servants or by other individuals—certain themes found persistent repetition. Of these, none featured more prominently

than India's supposedly religious character, a character inherently divided against itself by the mutually exclusive Hindu and Muslim communities.

With this goal in mind, I have endeavored to offer an introduction to the historical study of religion in South Asia that demonstrates both the larger policy, intellectual, and religious dynamics at work in the everyday operations of the British Indian empire and how these contributed to a recasting of communal relations. To do so requires interweaving various narrative strands. These include the coalescence of the period's understandings of what religion is, the development of disciplinary knowledge in Britain, the crystallization of the near-universal authority of empirical science, and the views of Britons in regard to Hindus and Muslims—and themselves. We will follow various historical threads of social and epistemic change in order to demonstrate how they caught the villagers of Chainpur in a Gordian knot entwining external forces with local collusion, adaptation, and resistance. In doing so, I hope to portray some of the on-the-ground engagements of British information orders with rural Indians. Far from the urban deliberations of Sir William Jones, the armchair reflections of James Mill, and the lecture hall ruminations of Max Müller, men like the Daniells, Buchanan, Thomas Twining, William Bowley, Alexander Cunningham, Chandra Kumar Mathur, Babu P. C. Mukherji, and Gordon Ray engaged Chainpur residents along with other rural north Indians in the pursuit of their various agendas. The conclusions that they took away from these engagements influenced—in varying, though sometimes miniscule degrees—the perspectives and policies of imperial administrators and the self-understandings of a great many Indians.

Earlier efforts to narrate the history of the Western study of religion have centered often on the men who wrote literature identified by later students of religion as theoretical landmarks: men (and until recently they mostly were only men) like Émile Durkheim, William James, Mircea Eliade, and Clifford Geertz. Instead of focusing primarily on scholars, I thought to consider the portrayals of a few villages in India through a series of visual, verbal, and statistical images. After all, the arguments made by intellectuals about religion repeatedly drew upon—directly or indirectly—just such observations as evidence. The fact that G. W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Müller never visited South Asia offered no impediment to each using Indian beliefs and practices as demonstrative of aspects of their theories. Each relied on the representations generated during the business of empire, mostly by Europeans. For instance, Weber's first citation in his *The Religion of India* references the Census of India reports, which he describes as "basic of the knowledge of contemporary India," while he considers volumes penned by specific British officials as belonging "to the best general sociological literature available."[1] The fact that the examples Weber and other Western intellectuals drew upon often originated as data from European colonial or imperial projects that were not concerned primarily with religion underscores the necessity of broadening the investigative frame for the history of the study of religions. This approach does not attempt to displace scholarly attention on elites—either Indian or British—since important new scholarship like that

of Arvind-Pal Mandair (2009) demonstrates that we have more to learn about this realm of activity as well.

While our attention, therefore, will primarily focus on representations of the Chainpur nexus of villages, we cannot ignore some deeper consideration of those who made these depictions. Some of these figures produced work that has played a crucial part in shaping not only contemporary Western and South Asian understandings but, to some extent, has continued to mold how current Chainpur residents understand themselves.* Francis Buchanan features prominently throughout the book for just this reason: not only do the Census of India and the Archaeological Survey of India currently attribute their origins partly to him, but at least one copy of his description of Chainpur circulates in the village. While Buchanan was one of the most influential reporters on north India and deserves more scholarly treatment than he has attracted, the focus on Chainpur leads me not to attempt a comprehensive account of his—or any figure's—life and accomplishments here.

Much of the knowledge fashioned by these outsiders about Chainpur was a peculiar thing because it did not obviously belong to any individual. Apart from travellers and missionaries, most of the Britons and Indians who contributed to the everyday accumulation of data and its synthesis into information did so in service to some arm of the East India Company or, later, British Government in India; and they did not so much own their projects as they served them. Unlike the scholars of the metropole whose university positions allowed them latitude in their written views, many of those engaged in survey, census, archaeological, and other information operations on behalf of the state did not so much define these endeavors as they were defined by them. Their interests may have been furthered by their conclusions, their self-perceptions reinforced by their studies, and their positions reaffirmed by their arguments, but theirs was not the power to entirely alter the inherited commonsense among Britons about South Asia by fiat, as intellectual histories sometimes imply.

Minor and midlevel titles like survey officer, census enumerator, and archaeological photographer often devolved to individuals as a required duty or an involuntary posting within the administrative system to which they had earlier hitched their destinies. Yet, there were hundreds of such authors creating localized representations for every Mill or Müller writing on the subcontinent in general, and their productions often had immediate, perhaps even enduring, impacts on local residents' lives. Hence, the significance of the epistemic order crafted under British rule cannot fully be appreciated by examining only the work of the major orientalists and metropolitan intellectuals. A surveyor's determination of a village boundary's position, a district officer's permission allowing a religious procession, a traveling artist's painting of a little-known landmark, a census enumerator's

* This approach owes its inspiration to Donna Haraway who, in her investigations of the bioindustry that made possible the first genetically engineered animal, shifted the attention from the individual scientists involved to the mouse they produced.

decision to count a tribal family as Hindus, and an itinerant preacher's choice where to establish a mission may have had little influence on how most Indians or Britons viewed South Asia except in the aggregate, but they often made important differences in the lives of locals. And, on occasion, some few officials had both the agency to sculpt new paradigms and the leverage to instantiate these through imperial policies.

Those who would attempt to deliberate on the epistemic impact of British rule in South Asia find themselves on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, if they craft a narrative about the displacement of Indian sciences by British forms of knowledge, they appear to champion those British forms and dismiss Indian agency. On the other hand, if they overemphasize the continuities of indigenous knowledge, they diminish the impact of British hegemony. Scholars have attended to this dilemma through a variety of responses. Deepak Kumar, taking one approach, has described Indian agency in terms of the ability to translate European science into indigenous terms for local concerns. Kapil Raj, representing another tack, has argued that British science was constituted through the imperial encounter and owes as much to its Indian interlocutors as to its European proponents. In other words, Western science was not a done thing, a perfected form, when it arrived in South Asia. In both cases, an effort is made to recognize Indian agency, though with different conclusions about the impact of the disparity of power.

My approach attempts to recognize Indian agency without overlooking the inherent limits of Indian resistance in epistemic, economic, and political systems dominated by Britons, while also recognizing that accommodation to or acceptance of Western-originated science could also be an expression of agency. Many Indians adapted to the recently introduced systems of knowledge because they considered this a necessary strategy if they were going to succeed in the British-established order, while others found these systems a more effective means of achieving other goals. Political pressures to adapt increased as the British state shifted from an initial episteme inherited from the defunct Mughal order to one more influenced by (but never entirely in keeping with) European models. This was certainly the case in cartography, statistics, and ethnography. The power of the Western-originated episteme is evidenced by the desire—indeed, the demand—by many Indians to be included in categories perpetuated by Britons. Initial Indian fears of being surveyed for the census were slowly succeeded by fears of *not* being represented by the census. Various groups campaigned to be included in the "religion" category so as to politically assert their religious identities provincially and nationally, and to categorically resist efforts by others to subsume them within *their* numbers. Meanwhile, other Indians adopted some of the newly introduced forms of knowledge without entirely rejecting older ones. Hence, Hindi-speaking Hindus added the European notion of "religion" as one of the meanings connoted by the Sanskrit-derived term *dharm*.

Such complexities and divergences of response can only be expected given the myriad individuals involved over centuries in both the European-Indian engagement and the simultaneous crystallization of empirical science. The expansion of their cultural contacts around the world challenged Europeans in ways that prompted the search for new ways

of knowing, while the globalized reach of European imperialism required more effective tools of social control. Without accident, trigonometrical surveyors in British India did far more to advance the field than anyone working in Europe, while Francis Galton was serving in the Indian Civil Service when he invented the modern system of fingerprint identification. In these and myriad other instances, forms of knowledge coalescing in the imperial context relied upon Indian labor, leadership, funding, innovation, and local knowledge, as each subsequent chapter shall demonstrate.

These imperial forms of knowledge have undergone increasing historiographical and deconstructionist studies since Edward Said's milestone *Orientalism* (1978). Just as scholarship has split in regard to the origin of South Asian religious communalism—with some blaming British policies and perspectives (Pandey 1994) and others finding significant, pre-British religious antipathies (Lorenzen 2006, Brajadulal 1998, Talbot 1995)—so too recent works have also divided on the question of Indian involvement in British knowledge projects. While some argue for minimal input (Cohn 1996), others consider Indian participation essential and formative (Bayly 1996). Meanwhile, the role of Britons in fashioning a religion entitled "Hinduism" has drawn considerable controversy (Oddie 2006, Lorenzen 2006, Pennington 2005, King 1999, Balagangadhara 1994, Inden 1990). More recently, scholars have turned to issues regarding science in British India, with special attention given to Indian participation, accommodation, and rejection (Raj 2006, Raina and Habib 2004, Prakash 1999, Kumar 1997, Baber 1996, Ludden 1993, Habib 1991).

My attempt here is to complement this scholarship by focusing on the relatively underexamined intersection of religion, science, and empire. Communal sentiments certainly predated the British political ascent, but foreign rule unwittingly refashioned these into new, more volatile forms. While Indians did not control the larger epistemic and political processes that led to this change, they increasingly contributed to them, a dynamic that culminated in the Hindu and Muslim nationalist campaigning that proved so devastatingly powerful in the 1940s. Throughout, those promoting an image of a bifurcated subcontinent populated by mutually exclusive and inherently antagonistic populations of Hindus and Muslims used the developing discourse of science—particularly its classification paradigm—to legitimate and promote their claims. This book does not attempt to map the full spectrum of state knowledge projects as Bayly's does (1996). It focuses primarily on published, publicly available sources, to the omission of materials such as court documents and police reports that, however significant, impossibly broaden an already broad study. The book attempts occasional comparison of pre-British and British epistemic orders (unfortunately omitted from much scholarship on British India) while also offering some comparison with religious and epistemic events in Britain, as modeled so well by Peter van der Veer (2001). Finally, the focus on Chainpur necessarily excludes the orientalist tradition with its focus on textual research. Apparently, local residents produced no text that excited the attentions of orientalists.[†]

[†] I could find only one vernacular text that both focused on Chainpur and purported to originate before 1947, the hithertofore oral *kursinama* considered in chapter 8.

Ideally, this book would offer what van der Veer terms an "interactional history"[2] that describes European and Indian mutual influences, while recognizing the asymmetries in those interactions. Sadly, too few indigenous records survive to give much insight into either the views of the period's villagers or how they responded to British intrusions and representations. Very few Indian publications from the period of British rule describe Chainpur—whether in English, Hindi, Urdu, or Bhojpuri—and none have a Chainpur author. The unfortunate fact is that Chainpur nexus voices have not been preserved in any manner but oral traditions and the English-language representations of outsiders. Although many of these oral tellings continue today as *suni-sunai*,[†] it is difficult to determine how closely they accord with those narrated in the past. British and Indian visitors occasionally published what they said Chainpur residents told them, but we seldom if ever know who told them, in what social context, and with what purpose. Meanwhile, the *kursinama* and other more formal narrative traditions found in many villages appear almost entirely absent in Chainpur (see chapter 8 for the sole known exception). These difficulties are compounded by the fact that, a half century after independence, residents seldom recall Britons' local presence, although they often rehearse school-learned social memories of their national presence. Indeed today—beyond pamphlets about a local temple's history and the sign outside the one site preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India—residents rely mostly on *suni-sunai* for local knowledge of their past. As demonstrated in my previous work, this narrative tradition represents a formal method of maintaining and communicating social memories, however few of these concern the period of the Raj.[3] Nevertheless, the self-representations of British-period residents remains largely unknown except for the glimpses suggested by the accounts of visitors, who seem to have controlled most of what the larger world knew about the village nexus.

Without adequate local voices from the period, our focus on how outsiders produced representational forms of Chainpur puts us in danger of reducing Chainpur's historical inhabitants to mere objects, devoid of agency and subjectivity. Hence, we must continually remind ourselves that—then, as now—local residents who interact with outsiders have exercised their agency both in silence and in speaking, in cooperation and resistance. Buchanan found this when the village zamindar "pretended to be sick" rather than answer his questions[4]; Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Ray discovered this as Chainpur Hindus and Muslims assured him of their mutual regard despite the tension evident between them[5]; and I realized this any number of times when potential interlocutors politely, yet repeatedly, offered reasons why they needed to miss our meetings. Meanwhile, we must also recognize that those invited to speak for the record during the Raj tended to be elite

[†] While the phrase literally translates as "hear-say," the connotation among Chainpur residents is more "trusted received knowledge" than what the English would suggest.

males, thus almost eliminating from view and voice women and children, as well as those men with little ritual, social, economic, or political status.

### WHY CHAINPUR?

Of the million villages existing in India, why choose this one as the focus for this tale of imperialism and globalization? The most subjective reason stems from my nearly two-decade-long relationship with the residents of this area (which I formerly designated by the pseudonym "Arampur").[§] But there are more compelling reasons. First, and most compelling of them all, the British and Indian visitors who visited Chainpur recorded their impressions using a startlingly broad range of representational methods such as reports, paintings, floor plans, histories, and photographs, many of which survive.[6] Clearly, Chainpur's features proved attractive to a range of British concerns. It represented an important market and population center that drew administrators and military recruiters, as well as a police *thana* (precinct headquarters). A large, Sassanid-era mausoleum lured ambitious painters, followed by diligent archaeologists. Rich soil and ample irrigation attracted indigo planters. The temple of a deified Brahman drew proselytizing missionaries and then enticed curious folklorists. Hence, Chainpur not only stood at the overlap of multiple British interests, but also attracted deepening attention. Each published representation drew that much more notice. Ironically, given our interest in the centrality of religion in these depictions, the lack of visitation by scholars specialized in the empirical study of religion serves as another bonus to a focus on Chainpur. Because a discipline of this sort arose last among the others we will explore, it makes the emphasis on religion in the other coalescing fields of knowledge all the more apparent and its influence all the more evident.

Despite the increasing attention outsiders paid to it, Chainpur never turned into the spectacle that drew British tourists as did the remains of Sasaram and Sarnath. The roads leading to Chainpur hardly made it the most difficult village to reach in the moffusal, but it also took special effort to visit as it stood aside from the region's main avenues of transit. Moreover, because it remained only a village, Chainpur likely had few amenities for travellers. Overall, Chainpur represented a place with features of interest, but beyond the comfortable purview of imperial officials. As C. A. Bayly has noted, the weak link in the British information order lay between the district town and the rural areas. While this link dramatically snapped in the rebellions of 1857, as evident in Shahabad District itself,[7] imperial and private British engagements with Chainpur demonstrated how it was reconstituted.

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[§] The anonymity I had once hoped to practice in regard to my work in Chainpur is not possible in a project based on published sources. However, all living informants have been given pseudonyms and, if necessary, their personal details have been obscured.

Another reason why Chainpur serves our task so well is that it stands in the state of Bihar. Although associated today with abject poverty, rampant corruption, virulent casteism, and a violent Maoist insurgency, Bihar served as an especially important province in British India. Bihar, with Bengal, comprised the regions that the East India Company first obtained Mughal permission to control in South Asia. Although administrators, missionaries, and artists may have given Bengal proper more attention, Bihar represented an essential transition zone between the secure realm surrounding the British capital in Calcutta (today, Kolkata) and the more uncertain realms of Nepal, the "Upper Provinces" (today's Uttar Pradesh and Punjab) and "the Central Provinces" (Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra). Nearly all Britons and Indians who transited between Bengal and the western reaches of the Gangetic Valley traveled through Chainpur's district, Shahabad. The most traversed road, the Grand Trunk (GT), and, later, the most important rail line, the Grand Chord, each extend across Shahabad, passing but a dozen kilometers north of Chainpur. An important subsidiary road from Sasaram ran across the northern boundary of Chainpur's fields and led westward to the GT, just east of Benares. Meanwhile, all those passing along the river Ganga, whether on flat-bottom barges or steam-powered launches, moved across the north border of Shahabad. Even if Britons did not consider Chainpur an important destination, many passed nearby on their way elsewhere.

However, Chainpur was not chosen for this study because it is "an average Indian village," if such a thing exists. Chainpur's population has long exceeded most villages in the vicinity. Its bazaars eclipse in extent those of most villages not located on a major road. And, of course, it has garnered more foreign attention than most villages anywhere in India—both before and after independence—because of its unique combination of factors. Yet despite these unusual qualities, Chainpur remains very much a village, and its residents only ever refer to it as a *gao* (village), never as a *nagar* (town or city). Despite its busy commerce and sophisticated communications, it remains deeply tied to the rhythms of agricultural life in all its social, economic, and religious dimensions.

The constancy of British and Indian visits throughout the two centuries of British rule provides a sizable record of the representational forms used to know Indians overall. However, the surviving documentation, though generous for a village, is limited. Hence, the context of our investigation—which necessarily sacrifices geographical breadth for the sake of a more detailed examination of one region—occasionally widens on those occasions when village-specific materials prove scarce, so as to consider the district (Shahabad), the province (Bihar), the presidency (Bengal), and the neighboring province of U.P. (which shares the Bhojpur linguistic region to which Chainpur belongs). Historians of other parts of British India will undoubtedly find that many of the specific conditions described here did not pertain in regions they study. They may know of places with much more vernacular material on the historical topics discussed than what was available in and in regard to Chainpur, or with more examples of Indian involvement in creating representations. These contestations will simultaneously deepen and widen my

understandably limited study. However, while the administration of Bihar differed in myriad ways from that of Punjab or Madras, the overall dynamics of comparison, the overwhelming emphasis on religion, and the persistent justification through science did not. This makes the extreme focus on one set of villages useful in the effort to understand the larger ramifications of the local knowledge produced during British rule.

A final reason for studying Chainpur is that it offers a counterweight to historiography on this period that has focused preponderantly on cities. The sheer magnitude of India's rural population—about 88% of the overall population by 1941—demands our attention,[8] especially at a time when village studies have declined.[9] Certainly I do not advocate a return to the portrayal of India as an amalgamation of "village republics" as early anthropologists like Henry Maine imagined,[10] since Chainpur was—and is—deeply embedded in a series of interlinked arcs of social, material, political, economic, and religious exchange and influence. British and Indian published representations of Chainpur evidence this complex integration well. For instance, when historical authors used the name "Chainpur," they might signify the village alone or the nexus of villages that has Chainpur at its center. So, when William Daniell and Alexander Cunningham described Bakhtiyar Khan's massive mausoleum in Chainpur, they actually were standing in Malik Sarai, a neighboring village. It is possible this reflects that local residents then, as they do now, routinely used the name "Chainpur" to refer to any one of a series of concentric spaces: the habitation of Chainpur proper, that village's surrounding fields, and the satellite villages that rely on Chainpur as a commercial, social, and religious nucleus. This intervillage dynamic and the complex identities associated with it destabilize the image of autonomous village communities.[11]

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

In order to demonstrate how the British information order developed with its emphasis on Indian religions and scientific justification, each of the book's chapters centers on a specific form of knowledge and traces its crystallization into an intellectual discipline. The representations of Chainpur made by British and Indian visitors provide ample evidence of the historical changes in how they viewed the human and natural worlds. The order of the chapters generally reflects the chronological development of the disciplines they discuss. The increasing involvement of Indians in each subsequent chapter offers testimony to their expanding appropriation, adaptation, and advancement of forms of knowledge whose nascence may have been European but whose crystallization as disciplines occurred in imperial contexts. Equally as important, theoretical interludes between the initial chapters progressively explicate the dynamics at work in comparison: the heart of all knowledge.

The first chapter provides a general overview by outlining how secular British forms of knowledge developed within and as a matrix of scientific knowledge in the context of

European empire and religion. Although popular histories celebrate the emancipation of science from theology, a Christian-inflected notion of religion remained an important category in many emerging forms of knowledge. Meanwhile, the perception of an overall unity to and ultimate superiority of "the" sciences relative to almost all other forms of knowledge slowly coalesced into scientism, a popular ideology of knowledge that spread universally by the quickening forces of imperialism and globalization. Specifically, the chapter outlines the notion of scientism, the ideology that took Western-originated science as a singular, seminal form of knowledge and viewed its component disciplines as interrelated, making possible a totalized view of any natural or human object. Scientism informed not only the increasingly specialized practitioners of European learning but, at least as significantly, it represented a popular ideology by which Westerners—and increasingly those under their imperial control—invested the products and symbols of European science with epistemic authority. Often this directly undermined religious authorities and led to the popular perception of an irreconcilable variance between religion and science.

Chapter 2 contends that the differences between Mughal and British cartography demonstrate the basic continuities and divergences between the respective information orders. The first British record of Chainpur appears on a map produced in the early 1770s by the East India Company's surveyors. Despite the detailed maps created by South Asians in the centuries leading to British conquest, European maps differed in ways that precisely reflected central tenets of scientism. In the mapping projects that followed, Chainpur, like other villages, became known as a strictly bounded object locatable using a universally standardized system of longitude and latitude. Not only did many maps rely on religion as a marker of essential difference between Chainpur residents, they also became instrumental in the effort to depict Hindu and Muslim populations which, like the village, were supposed to exist as exclusive communities delineated by clear perimeters. The implicit trust in and wide-scale appropriation of maps to express the results of practically every discipline—including religious studies—demonstrates their central role in scientism, even as this dynamic also manifested a rising confidence in cartography to create a totalistic representation: another quality of scientism.

The third chapter illustrates how contemporary Protestant theology with its categories of religious difference influenced British views of India. It does so with a focus on travel writing, a popular form of knowledge production that served as an ethnographic prelude to the disciplines of anthropology and folklore. A theoretical interlude preceding the chapter initiates our deliberations on comparison by examining the dynamics at work in the construction of categories. It argues that comparison, like classification, is fundamental to cognition. As later chapters will show, while the various disciplines developed they often gravitated toward one or more modes of comparison. The choice shaped audiences' reception by guiding how they perceived the relationship among the entities compared. The chapter explains how the ethnographic accounts of missionaries and other Christian travellers to Chainpur and the region show the influence of

Christian theology in the comparative assessments of humanity made by many Britons and some Indians.

Chapter 4 investigates how a different set of travelogues, influenced more by the empiricism of a burgeoning scientism, diverged from the theologically motivated examples of this genre investigated in the previous chapter. Although continuities remained with earlier travel-writing traditions, new ideas gave rise to the preeminence of "on the spot" reporting that privileged the authority of observation over tradition. The landscape artists Thomas and William Daniell literally illustrated how empirical travelogues differed from their theological counterparts with the sketches and paintings recording their visit to Chainpur in 1792. Some of these images formed this uncle-and-nephew team's influential corpus of art that, for generations, significantly shaped British views of "India." Although scientistic empiricism informed these images and the written accounts of later British and Indian travel writers who visited Chainpur, religion remained a central category by which they differentiated between Indian communities and their architectural and artistic productions. This remained so from the Daniells' visits to Chainpur to those made by SDO Ray in 1940. Combining the issue of scientism with the theme of comparison from the previous chapter, the fourth chapter will demonstrate the influence of ethnographic comparison on the scientific discipline of anthropology as it coalesced in the nineteenth century. This illustrates the first of five modes of comparison identified by religion scholar Jonathan Z. Smith and elaborated upon in the second interlude: ethnographic, encyclopedic, morphologic, evolutionary, and statistical.

Chapter 5 explores the rise of statistics and demography as disciplines defined by another key element of scientism: systematic quantification. District administrators had long been directed to provide numerical information on some of the populations and products of Chainpur, but with the 1872 census the British administration for the first time attempted to count all the village residents as part of an endeavor to totalistically account for the entire population of British India. The perceived success of this form of census can be measured by its repetition every decade through independence, and to this day. Although nearly every successive census contributed new categories by which to better know the population, from the very start religion remained central. The problems that census takers encountered demonstrate well the differences between the British effort and those made by South Asians prior to British rule, and the significance in the *types* of categorization deployed, as elaborated upon in the third interlude. Difficulties in classification also show the peculiarities of scientistic taxonomy—used to decisively distinguish moose from monotremes, eels from elephants—and the complications that arise when applied to more complex, self-constructed, and malleable human identities. As the chapter shows, while some South Asians resisted these categorical impositions, others appropriated them for their perceived benefit.

The sixth chapter explores how, as two roots of the developing discipline of anthropology, folklore and ethnology represent divergent efforts to use narrative for the sake of comparison. British and Indian travellers and officials engaged in informal folkloric studies

found particular interest in and diverse renditions of Chainpur's longstanding narrative involving an unjust local raja and the ghost of his slighted Brahman vizier. While some considered such narratives as endangered by an immanent, irresistible progress, others viewed them as representative of an enduring national genius. Meanwhile, British depictions of tribals, Dravidians, and Aryans were rooted in efforts to construct a metanarrative of racial distribution, linguistic variation, caste origination, and religious formation. Both folklore and ethnology drew upon genealogical and morphological forms of comparison as the anchors for their metanarratives. Finally, the emerging discipline of anthropology helped establish some classification systems of comparison that were less ethnocentric than those found in the folkloric and ethnological projects that contributed to its development.

Chapter 7 investigates historiography and archaeology. Alexander Cunningham, father of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), visited Chainpur's monuments in 1881, within a decade of the Survey's permanent founding. The ASI resulted from the convergence of two coalescing components of British efforts to know South Asia: historiography and state-founded institutions of knowledge. The establishment of a variety of learned institutions in Britain and India (such as the Royal Society, the Asiatic Society, and the Indian Museum) reflected both the increasing significance of networks of amateur and professional scholars and the role of institutions in facilitating those networks and promoting the results of scientific investigations to the public. The ASI's work to identify and preserve artifacts of Chainpur's past demonstrates both the conditions in which the British state founded institutions of knowledge and the centrality of religion in British historiography and archaeology.

Chapter 8 examines the place of scientism and the category of religion in Chainpur today. Although the British Empire withdrew sixty years ago, the hegemony of its epistemic order has long outlasted its political dominance. While British rule dominates the history learned by those Chainpur residents who attend school, few have heard of Britons visiting Chainpur. Yet those visits continue to have ramifications in the lives of villagers, whether through the continuation of the decadal census, the recent repairs to a monument by the ASI, the classification of religious communities, or the visitation of foreign scholars attracted by British-era accounts.

## SOME CAUTIONS

This book is fashioned to address two audiences. For scholars of religion and their students, I hope to offer an approachable demonstration of how a contemporary, globalized vision of religion and religions coalesced through the locally enacted information projects of European imperialism. I also endeavor to demonstrate how such projects in British India illustrate Jonathan Z. Smith's observations regarding comparison. For historians and their students, I seek to build on previous scholarship regarding the impact of British

imperialism on the religious landscape of South Asia. Specifically, I hope to illustrate how religion featured as the primary category of interpretation for most British—and, increasingly, Indian—knowledge projects. Because the British administration of India played such an important part in the solidification of rigid religious boundaries, this study needs to pay attention to bureaucratic details that will surely seem overly prosaic to many scholars of religion, though routine to historians. In order to understand the routinization of the bifurcation paradigm among Britons and Indians who managed the empire from the fields of Chainpur to the halls of India House, the breadth and depth of British administration needs to be explored. Thakbust surveys, enumerators' visits, and archaeological tours hardly seem the stuff of scholarship on religion, but these mundane tasks provided some of the basic information by which Britons and Indians understood India in the effort of governing Indians that ultimately led to partitioning India along religious lines.

This book does not attempt to provide a comprehensive investigation into all forms of knowledge exercised by Britons. Excluded are representational types either not included in depictions of Chainpur (such as the textualist investigations of orientalists) or not publicly disseminated (such as police and intelligence reports). Moreover, this volume does not attempt to narrate a complete history of the disciplines under consideration. Hopefully, the volume will satisfy those interested in how the authority of scientific disciplines served to repeatedly reemphasize the centrality of religion in South Asian societies among British and Indian audiences.

While attempting to describe some of the dynamics at play in the representations of religion in British India, Chainpur's demographics destines this study to focus almost entirely on the portrayals of Hindus and Muslims. There are no Jains or Buddhists in Chainpur today. One Sikh family lives there and a handful of recently converted Christians. Historically, there is no evidence of significant populations of these groups in the region recently. So, although an examination of British views of these religions would undoubtedly also provide insights, it falls outside our purview here.

## A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY AND TRANSLITERATION

The history of the British in South Asia is, in part, one of linguistic adaptation. Foreign administrators, missionaries, and travellers sought to reproduce in European languages the exotic names of Indian individuals and places. Regional, local, and individual variations did not make this task easier. The history of post-independence India has been, in part, one of reappropriating the agency to name. Calcutta has become Kolkata, Bombay Mumbai, and Madras Chennai. Any twenty-first-century author's decision on which of a half-dozen Anglicized names and spellings to choose for one location's name is necessarily arbitrary. I have decided to render names as they most popularly were used in English at the end of British rule. This preserves some of the nomenclature of the period under consideration. Post-independence equivalents can be found in the place glossary, as can more details on the use of place names.

For Hindi and Urdu terms, I have relied on the transliterations provided by R. S. McGregor and by John T. Platts in the absence of a common English rendering. Meanwhile, in order to maintain a level of accessibility, I have not included diacritics in the main text. Those wishing transliterated versions of the terms used can find these in the term glossary and the index. Although English language books increasingly indicate the Arabic, Persian, and Urdu *hamza* and *ain* in names and words (such as Qur'an), I omit these as well, since such efforts tend to be confusing for most readers and unnecessary for specialists.

When rendering names and honorifics, I have followed the English spelling chosen by individuals when known, and followed standard transliterations when not. Hence, "Syed Ahmad Khan," yet "Saiyid Ahmad Shah."

Finally, I prefer to describe British rule in South Asia as "imperial" instead of "colonial" for a few different reasons. First, the British seldom referred to their presence in the subcontinent as colonial. While the Colonial Office managed British presence in North America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, the India Office administered operations in South Asia. After 1858, the Imperial Government replaced the East India Company as the subcontinent's British ruler. Second, the argument that British India served as a colony because it extracted wealth for the disposal of the metropole sidesteps the fact that many empires work in the same manner. On the other hand, the fact that large-scale, permanent European settlement often led to far more dire consequences—including genocide—for indigenous inhabitants than experienced under other situations of imperial control, seems to warrant a more selective use of the term "colonization."

> India is supposed to be a religious country above everything else, and Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and others take pride in their faiths and testify to their truth by breaking heads. The spectacle of what is called religion, or at any rate organized religion, in India and elsewhere has filled me with horror, and I have frequently condemned it and wished to make a clean sweep of it. Almost always it seems to stand for blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition and exploitation.
>
> I feel sure that it was a good thing for India to come in contact with the scientific and industrial West. Science was the great gift of the West, and India lacked this, and without it she was doomed to decay. The manner of our contacts was unfortunate, and yet, perhaps only a succession of violent shocks could shake us out of our torpor. From this point of view the Protestant, individualistic, Anglo-Saxon English were suitable, for they were more different from us than most other Westerners, and gave us greater shocks.
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> —JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, 1982 (1936), 374, 436.

# 1

# Religion, Science, and Scientism

NEHRU'S REFLECTIONS ON the character of India and the West appear to confirm a binary basic to the outlook of many others of his, and our, day. The two words "science" and "religion" often have brought to mind a set of apparent opposites: observation and revelation, rationality and emotion, Galileo and the church, John Scopes and Christian Fundamentalists, West and East. For many, science and religion have represented mutually exclusive realms of knowledge, equally dismissive of one another's claims. At times, science and religion have appeared as two wrestling actors, struggling for control of society: science anticipates religion's gradual weakening each time it illumines some previously dark cave of unknowing; religion struggles to free people from science's soulless materialism and stone-cold logic. No wonder, then, that so many Westerners have made pilgrimage to India in search of some alternative to their society's malaise of spirit while many Indians have looked to emulate the West in an effort to harness science to their ambitions.

Of course, religion and science struggle for and against nothing. They are not actors or agents but only terms used to refer to realms of particular types of discourse, praxis, and authority. That religion and science are spoken of in certain societies as though they existed concretely and acted animatedly reflects how the claims, practices, and authoritativeness with which they are associated enjoy a prominence in those societies. That *religion* and *science* have come to mean what we now understand them to mean only in the last few centuries demonstrates how unstable their definitions are and how less-than-careful efforts to trace their histories any further back are prone to reflect more about conditions today than then.

More importantly, the reification of science and religion as concrete realities and active agents reflects the heavy investment some individuals and communities have made in one *against* the other. Many view their societies as developmentally or even morally hobbled by the inordinate influence of one side of this supposed binary at the expense of the other. This stems, in part, from a conceit that one can and should be purified of the other, as if arguing for its holistic power in the face of the other. Hence Nehru, apostle of science and secularism, declared not only that he wished to make a "clean sweep" of religion but, later, "It is science alone that can solve the problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition."[1] Histories of science have been particularly prone to project such reifications when some (not all) valorize the heroic extrication of science from religion through a series of brave confrontations: Galileo Galilei defending himself against the infamous Inquisition of an imperious church, Charles Darwin standing unmoved despite the whirlwind of Evangelicalist fury, Clarence Darrow demolishing the biblical truisms of William Jennings Bryan. In fact, most of the most celebrated figures in the Western history of science remained religious (if not quite orthodox) to the end: Bacon,[2] Kepler, Descartes, Boyle, Newton,[3] Sedgewick, Lyell,[4] among many others.

Historians are not alone in recognizing the oversimplification inherent in the religion/science binary. Note how Nehru's reflection on the "scientific and industrial West" segued seamlessly into a description of the British as Protestant. Many current Western pilgrims seeking some pervasive Indian spirituality recoil to discover how their expectations flag in the face of the techno-savvy denizens of Delhi, Hyderabad, and Benares, some of whom believe that the "superstitions" of religion hold India back. Meanwhile, any number of Indian disciples of Western science struggle to understand how 55% of Americans can disagree with Darwin and trace their genealogy to divinely created humans, many viewing unharnessed science as corrosive to their nation's moral foundation.[5]

Far from mutually antagonistic competitors or equally exclusive spheres of endeavor, the actions and discourses associated with religion and science derive often from intimately entwined and interrelated currents of interest and tradition. Unfortunately, in this context as in so many others, representations of conflict sell more copy than more nuanced descriptions. For instance, in early twentieth-century America, secular academics and essayists perpetuated more than anyone else the popular notion of interminable

warfare between religion and science with widely read books such as *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science* and *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. One contemporary Christian Fundamentalist complained that in these works, "Science and Christianity are pitted against each other. Their interests are held to be antagonistic."[6]

One of the costs of this popular and, to some degree, scholarly overemphasis on the "religion versus science conflict" has been a failure to properly appreciate the mutual imbrication of each into one the other. The reification of religion and science creates an imagined set of epistemic empires that struggle, one against the other, in a zero-sum game. Through their global efforts at proselytization, each supposedly seeks to win a universal war for truth. By adjusting the focus from such supposedly animate empires of truth to the representations created by individuals and groups who associate with one or both sets of activities, we trace better the history of their interrelations.

However, before endeavoring to examine those representations, we need to clarify what we mean by "religion," "science," and "scientism." This begins with a recognition that the nineteenth century represented a critical junction when, not coincidentally, the trajectories of meaning for *religion* and *science* crossed. Before that century, English speakers tended to refer to *science* in the plural: the science of nature, the science of grammar, moral science, and so on. Meanwhile, *religion* was referenced either in the singular or the plural. But in the eighteenth century, a great urge to classification not only sought to delineate the various religions of the world (e.g., Aboriginal religion, Hinduism, Islam) but also to classify them according to shared characteristics (e.g., animism, polytheism, monotheism). Simultaneously, English speakers began to refer to *science* as though it represented a unified realm of knowledge. This was particularly noteworthy given how the century saw a rapid diversification in fields of science (e.g., geology, sociology, anthropology). Nevertheless, the practitioners of these sciences, despite their theoretical differences, recognized a common notion of "doing science" and excluded from the category *science* those fields they deemed not to share this notion, such as alchemy and grammar. References to *religion* in the singular may have relied on the presumption of some common denominator(s) shared by all religions (e.g., morality, belief in a deity), but they seldom assumed any implicit unity among them. The notion of a unified science would help promote the hegemony of science in Britain and its conquered territories and, simultaneously, promote an unsympathetic view of, if not religion itself, certain religions.

In order to contextualize the role terms such as *religion* and *science* played in the era of British India, this chapter has a broader historical sweep than subsequent chapters. Tracking the changes of these words' meanings over the long term illustrates their historicity while considering current conditions demonstrates how the imagined interaction of religion and science has not diminished with the new millennium. It is not unusual, as we shall see, for some to consider religion and science to be on a trajectory trending toward one's increasing social control that comes at the expense of the other's

autonomy. Contemporary examples, however, demonstrate both the fallacy of the religion-science binary and how some conceive these supposedly separate realms of knowledge. In particular, we shall see how a popular scientific hegemony—what I term *scientism*—developed and penetrated most dimensions of Western societies, including religion.

## *RELIGION* AS A CONCEPT

Even in their brevity, Nehru's comments reflect the complexities involved in the terms "religion" and "religions." On the one hand, he refers to religion as a singular entity, as a "spectacle." On the other, he discusses "organized religion," apparently in reference to the multiplicity of "faiths" for which Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs break heads. The use of the term "faith" as a synonym for "religion" implies that religions or, at least these religions, are essentially reducible to a decision, an intellectual disposition, a belief. However, Nehru disparages the merit of those thoughts when he claims that most organized religions involve unreflective or "blind" belief that is dogmatic and bigoted, superstitious and exploitive. He recognizes that the faithful view these ideas as truth, but he views them as otherwise. Science provides an alternative to religion, a way to transcend the torpor and decay that characterize a supposedly religious India.

In contrast with Nehru, the scholar of religion, S. N. Balagangadhara, has challenged the very applicability of the term *religion* to Hindu and Sikh cultures, arguing that the term derives from and pertains only to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Meanwhile, the religionist Wilfred Cantwell Smith preferred to abandon the term in favor of a paired set of labels: "faith" and "cumulative tradition." Anthropologist Talal Asad has declared *religion* to be a product of European secularism and "faith" to be a Christocentric misrepresentation of what *religion* hopes to encompass. These contrary arguments all rely upon the history of the ancient origination of the term *religion*, its trajectory through European history, and its development in the context of non-Western contact and imperial domination. As Nehru's sentiments evidence, the various understandings of and expectations for religion (as a concept) and religions (as phenomena) in both Europe and abroad had a consequential impact on British, and Indian, representations of South Asia. The histories of these understandings and expectations represent an essential background for the specific cases examined in future chapters.

Religion, so commonly presumed to be a universal phenomenon in human history, remains stubbornly resistant to universal definition. The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists eight definitions of "religion," the oldest dating to the thirteenth century.[7] James H. Leuba once collated all the extant definitions of religion he could find. His list included more than fifty different descriptions.[8] The American Academy of Religion (AAR), representing ten thousand professional educators who specialize in a religion or religions, offers no definitions on the website describing its history and mission.[9] Theologians,

philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians of religions (who, one might think, would most be able to do so) have all tried their hand but none have succeeded in creating a broadly accepted definition. Some suggest the abandonment of the word altogether. Cantwell Smith, for instance, went so far as to argue against definition itself, "One has radically misunderstood our world if one imagines that things can be defined."[10]

Jonathan Z. Smith, among the foremost of religion scholars to tackle the issue, more helpfully places the activity of definition within the context of knowing itself. When noting how earlier students of religion justified a surrender to the impossibility of defining *religion* by reference to the multiple definitions collected by Leuba, Smith retorts, "Not at all! The moral of Leuba is not that religion cannot be defined, but that it can be defined, with greater or lesser success, more than fifty ways." Smith concludes his investigations into the definition of the term with the declaration that, the diverse and changing meanings of *religion* notwithstanding, one can definitively declare that it "is a second-order, generic concept that plays the same role in establishing a disciplinary horizon that a concept such as 'language' plays in linguistics or 'culture' plays in anthropology. There can be no disciplined study of religion without such a horizon."[11] Smith recognizes that no set of words can successfully encompass what appears to be as much an abstraction as *language* and *culture*. He does not suggest that the various referents to which other definitions of religion point are irrelevant or nonexistent—anymore than nouns or music are insignificant—but, rather, that no matter what else religion may be, as a concept it features centrally in the formation of disciplined—and disciplinary—knowledge. The language of "discipline" (echoed in the AAR website's declaration that "the Academy welcomes all disciplined reflection on religion")[12] signals an important issue as it points toward the historical formation of increasingly specialized, systematized, and regulated knowledge.

The trajectory of the term *religion* in English traces the changes occurring in its use in anthropological descriptions, from a more theocentric paradigm to an increasingly humanistic and secular paradigm more suited to specialized disciplines. The premodern uses of the word demonstrated a mélange of meanings that increasingly overlapped with one another. Although clearly linked to *religio*, a word used in the Latin of learned circles throughout the medieval period, the ancient etymology of the word remains unclear. While Cicero argued that it stems from a term connoting "re-read," modern scholars favor a root from a word meaning "to bind." Whatever the case may be, by the fifth century, Christians clearly introduced a new sense to the term. Whereas previously Romans had used *religio* to refer to any single, inherited ritual, it now served Christians to indicate an abstraction that can take different forms and with which groups can be identified according to the beliefs. Hence, "Hellenism" and "Judaism"—which had not been defined previously by Christians as *religio* but as Greek or Jewish ethnic or cultural identities—now became associated with identities based on a unique set of beliefs. The projection of others' identities and beliefs served to help Christians rigidly demarcate their own identities and beliefs.[13] This use of *religio* would diminish during the medieval

period, and by the thirteenth century *religion* had entered English as a term designating a monastic life bound by vows. This meaning continues today in the distinction made by some Christians between the "religious" (those belonging to certain orders of clergy) and "lay people." Contemporaneously, the ancient Roman connotation reasserted itself—to coexist with the clerical one—referring to action done in relation to a deity.[14] Yet a little while later, the role of *religion* as a term of theological and identity demarcation would be reprised, this time in distinguishing European Christians from one another.

When the sixteenth-century monk Martin Luther challenged the rationale of various church teachings, he helped ignite the Protestant Reformation and redefine Christianity in Western Europe. The resultant alternatives in Christian practice and belief, combined with encounters in newly accessible lands with previously unknown or little-known peoples, prompted a gradual redefinition of the concept *religion*. On the one hand, English speakers increasingly associated *religion* with a condition of the mind. So, for instance, in 1592 Shakespeare had Romeo retort to a friend who tries to undermine Romeo's conviction in one woman's beauty,

> When the devout religion of mine eye
> Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fire
> And these,—who often drown'd, could never
> Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars![15]

One the other hand, Anglophones also used *religion* to refer to the actions impelled by conviction. These meanings became normative among English speakers by the eighteenth century, as attested in some of the first modern reference works. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) defined "religion" as "virtue" and the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1771) began its entry for "Religion, or Theology" by declaring, "To know God, and to render him a reasonable service, are the principle objects of religion." All these instances demonstrate how the primary medieval associations of religion with monasticism and ritual gave way to a modern connotation of belief and devotion. This mirrored the shift from the ritual orientation of medieval Catholic practice to the emphasis on belief in the Word of God in most Protestant theologies. Consequently—and demonstrating how Christian self-understandings fundamentally shaped the optics by which Europeans viewed the world at large—the different religions of the world came to be referred to as "faiths"[16] in exactly the manner Nehru demonstrated.

Compelled by the increasing encounters with non-Westerners that their imperialism afforded, Europeans made more sophisticated efforts to create a classificatory system of religion*s* under the umbrella category *religion*. For hundreds of years in medieval Europe, the primary classifications of what we now call "religion" were Christian, Jewish, Saracen (i.e., Muslim), and, as a default category, heathen/pagan/idolater (although "Saracen" might be excluded in favor of "heretic," to which Muslims might categorically belong if

not considered idolaters instead). Note that the classifications referred to groups or, according to contemporary use, "nations," and not religious *systems*. Most accounts until the nineteenth century described the practices and beliefs of Jews and pagans, not Juda*ism* and pagan*ism*.[17] However, in consequence of their increasing, imperial contacts, Europeans found these theological classifications increasingly inadequate.

Believing to the end that the lands he encountered were the East Indies, Columbus never realized how radically he had sailed off the map. Genesis 10, outlining the distribution of humanity to the three corners of Earth via the three sons of Noah (Japheth's descendants in Asia Minor, Shem's in Arabia and Mesopotamia, and Ham's in Egypt and its environs), had served as Europe's template to classify the world's population throughout the medieval period and even after Columbus's voyages challenged it. In the nineteenth century, European linguistics described as "Japhetic" the languages referred more commonly later as "Aryan"[18], and the languages of Jews and Arabs as "Semitic." Into the same century, Europeans and European-Americans justified their enslavement of Africans through reference to the curse of Noah that Ham's son's descendants would be servants of the progeny of Ham's two brothers. These examples of the endurance of biblical geography in some corners of the Western imagination notwithstanding, Columbus's contemporaries realized even before his death that Genesis could not account for the lands and people he encountered. This recognition that empirical observation carried the potential of challenging the Bible as a proof-text, the church as an authority, and theology as the arbiter of all knowledge represented but one moment in a gradual shift toward differently formulated European sciences.

In the course of the transition from the medieval to the modern, a redefinition of the terms "science" and "religion" occurred. The growth of rationalism, secularism, and scientism conjoined with the simultaneous decline of Christian social authority. In eloquent testimony to the co-origination of religious and secular perspectives, the word *secular* originated as a term for Christian clergy who lived "in the world," outside the monastic life of the "religious." After the Reformation, *secularize* developed as a verb used to indicate the transfer of land and property from the Catholic Church to civil authorities. The change in meaning was only possible with the development of a public sphere that separated ecclesiastical institutions from the realm of the state while providing a space for their intermediation. Simultaneously, most Europeans increasingly associated Christianity with individualized belief. Enlightenment *philosophes* such as Thomas Jefferson recommended the limitation of religious involvement in the state in order to safeguard individual citizen's freedom of conscience against possible constraint from what they perceived as the nonrational "enthusiasm" and intolerance endemic in religion. The so-called wars of religion that swept Europe following the Reformation had helped inculcate this concern.

In many European societies, as Christianity became increasingly reduced to the realms of "belief," "conscience," and "sensibility," the dynamics at work in secularism—a term

later coined to indicate an ideology of religion's sequestration to a limited social realm—gradually, but never entirely, displaced Christianity from science, state, education, and society at large, all of which it once infused so thoroughly.[19] Noting the increasing privatization of Christianity with its growing seclusion to the realm of experience, sociologist Max Weber in 1918 observed,

> That science today is irreligious no one will doubt in his innermost being, even if he will not admit it to himself. Redemption from the rationalism and intellectualism of science is the fundamental presupposition of living in union with the divine. This, or something similar in meaning, is one of the fundamental watchwords one hears among German youth, whose feelings are attuned to religion or who crave religious experiences. They crave not only religious experience but experience as such. The only thing that is strange is the method that is now followed: the spheres of the irrational, the only spheres that intellectualism has not yet touched, are now raised into consciousness and put under its lens. For in practice this is where the modern intellectualist form of romantic irrationalism leads. This method of emancipation from intellectualism may well bring about the very opposite of what those who take to it conceive as its goal.[20]

As Talal Asad pointedly remarks, religion "comes to resemble the conception Marx had of religion as ideology—that is, a mode of consciousness which is other than consciousness of reality, external to the relations of production, producing no knowledge, but expressing at once the anguish of the oppressed and a spurious consolation."[21] Some, like Marx, viewed the history of civilizations to lead progressively to the total displacement of religion by science.

However, most religions proved far more inextricably interwoven in the social fabric to be so easily worn threadbare by secularist and scientific ministrations. Indeed, although the eighteenth century began with the English East India Company rigorously struggling to exclude Christian missionaries from their South Asian domains so as not to upset a population they viewed as primarily religious, only a few decades later members of a burgeoning Evangelical movement successfully pressured the British government to admit missionaries. Today, the role of religions in politics—whether in India or Pakistan, Britain or France—startles some, perpetually caught off guard by the failure to perfectly partition a community's religious interests from its political concerns and an individual's religious engagements from her public life. The poignancy and persistence of the critique that "Islam" needs to undergo its own Protestant Reformation in order to inoculate itself from the travails of politicized religion demonstrates not only how innumerable Islamic traditions are imagined often as a singular, malleable entity, but also how unaware many Westerners are to the normative integration of Christianity into their own societies and polities.

The normativity of "secularism" for most Westerners shows itself in their presumption of secularism's universality. In fact, as scholars Janet Jakobsen and Anne Pellegrini demonstrate, one must speak in the plural of secularisms in light of the historically and socially specific conditions that have produced particular secular structures. Europe's multiple models of secularism developed in the context of Protestantism,[22] as would India's: a point obvious to many non-Europeans, as Nehru's comments illustrate. Meanwhile, the emphasis on the secular quality of academic knowledge has led to the marginalization of religion as a topic within much disciplined knowledge. For many, if not most, in the world today, the claim to science is a claim to a nonreligious, authoritative knowledge.

As Asad has noted, the West's transition from the medieval to the modern perspective can be measured in part by the exchanged positions of religion and science as socially authoritative. In the medieval world, the church's influence so permeated society that its place remained unquestioned and its claims to authority largely unchallenged; perhaps most unfortunate among his discoveries was Galileo's realization that scientific claims based on anomalous observations could be dismissed by ecclestiatical authority. By the twentieth century, the authority accorded professionalized scientists had become almost entirely unchallenged, despite strident debates regarding the benefits and costs of science. Even in as self-professedly and culturally religious (read: Christian) a country as the United States, those who deny some of the major claims of mainstream science, such as Christian Scientists, are popularly marginalized. The centrality of scientism has reduced religion to a mere set of "perspectives" among which consensus is no more likely than agreement about the beauty of a piece of art.[23] A measure of religion's exorcized position from many social worlds can be found in their synonymous use of *spirituality* to denote *religion*, using the former term to allude to the supposedly noncorporeal, individualistic essence of religion.

Moreover, science appears to completely occlude religion from that most coveted Enlightenment realm: rationality. As Richard King has illuminated, mysticism—seen by many as the generative core of all religions—stands as the antithesis of rationality. This is so both for those who consider the divergence of religion and rationality as a boon for mysticism and for those who see it as the bane of secularism, for acolytes of the New Age and for disciples of church-state separation.[24] In a contemporary case of the most widespread challenge to scientific conclusions, Christian Fundamentalists have principally sought to undermine the theory of evolution in the minds of other Christians not simply by discussing its supposed antagonism to the Bible, but by challenging it as inadequately scientific. In recognition that their religious standpoint represents mere perspective or opinion in the eyes of many if not most Americans, many Fundamentalists have chosen not to argue explicitly from the basis of Christian theology in debates about evolution in public education. Instead, they have opted to craft a scientistic theory—"intelligent design"—in order to compete for scientific authority.

## *RELIGION* AND EMPIRE

Returning to the early part of the modern period, we notice that in the crucible of all these changes—at the intersection of Protestantism, secularism, imperialism, and scientism—*religion* was reimagined. Overall, in the period of the Enlightenment and following, Europeans associated *religion* with a system, principally of belief but involving practices as well, to which one voluntarily attached oneself. Whereas many during and immediately following the Reformation related *religion* to the individual's knowledge of God, Europeans increasingly thought of the total set of religions as divergent systems of ideas. Wilfred Cantwell Smith ably described the change in terms of French Protestant reformer John Calvin (d. 1564) who wrote on doctrine, practice, and biblical interpretation without considering these as *religio*: "They are, rather, things that he hoped would institute or induce in people or guide them to or instruct them in a personal, dynamic, and worshipful 'recognition' of God to which he gave that name (*Christiana religio*). A century later men were calling by this name not that personal vision but the matters such as he set forth to lead to it: the system of beliefs and practices, considered as a system, irrespective of whether or not they elicited in the human heart a genuine fear of and love for God. The difference is momentous."[25] Later, Europeans applied the notion of religion as system to non-Christian traditions. Whereas the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the English use of "heathen" as far back as 971, "heathenism" arises only in 1605. Similarly, "Mahometanism" occurs first only in 1613, "Buddhism" in 1801, and "Confucianism" in 1862,[26] while recent research has suggested that the first recorded use of the term "Hinduism" occurred in 1787.[27] In each case, English speakers developed a term to identify the "-ism" or system imagined to encompass and define those who had been known earlier.[28] This marked a shift from the earlier European convention of referring to "nations" of Christians, Jews, Muslims, and heathens/pagans/idolaters mentioned previously. These inventions of religious systems become all the more notable in light of the fact that, with few exceptions, no equivalent word for these systems existed in the languages of their purported practitioners before their expression in modern European languages. Hindus and Jews appear not to have used the term "Hinduism" or "Judaism" before the nineteenth century.

Islamic traditions, however, have offered an exception. *Islam* appears repeatedly in the Quran, its commentaries, and Muslim discourse as a term connoting surrender (to Allah) through a prescribed set of practices and beliefs. Moreover, Muslims have often referred to Islam as *din* (e.g., Quran 3.19), a Quranic word commonly translated by modern interpreters as "religion" and used in connection with Jews and Christians (e.g., 4.171) as well as pagans (e.g., 6.137). All of this makes Islam one of the exceptions that prove the rule regarding the paucity of reified, systematic "religions" among non-Europeans in the premodern world.

As their age of discovery evolved into their age of global imperialism, Europeans developed new terms in order to get a better descriptive handle on the vast disparity of

behaviors, beliefs, and material cultures they observed abroad that overwhelmed the Christian categories into which they previously had slotted them. Europeans sought more elaborate classificatory systems, albeit ones in which Christianity remained a unique category to itself. The origination of new terminology applied to religions as traced in the *Oxford English Dictionary* marks the trajectory of these efforts: polytheism (1613), monotheism (1660), pantheism (1729), totemism (1791), fetishism (1801), henotheism (1860), animism (1866).[29] These terms marked a departure from the medieval taxonomy of Christian, Jew, Muhammadan, and heathen/pagan/idolator by providing new categories that could be (but were not always) used in less Christocentric ways. Notably, many of the neologisms served to complicate and pluralize the previously monolithic taxon "heathens."[30] Not coincidentally, these new terms emerged just as increasingly specialized forms of knowledge were coalescing gradually into disciplines, thus providing disciplinary specialists a more technical vocabulary with which to describe communities with which Europeans gradually had more communion and about which they had more documentation through imperialism. "Animism," for example, would be as inextricably linked to E. B. Tylor and nascent anthropology as "henotheism" would be to Max Müller and his early studies of religion.

As we shall see was the case with scientism, these new classifications and the understanding of religion as a system of belief and practice not only developed in no small part in response to the exigencies of empire, but they also significantly reshaped non-Western views in the context of Western political and cultural hegemony. By "hegemony," I mean here the predominant, asymmetrical influence one culture has with another. Historian Don Baker's research on European interactions in East Asia offers a particularly poignant set of examples of this dynamic. He has shown how, in the context of their imperial domination, Westerners provided not only the template for the nation-state but also new models for managing state relations with preexisting associations, now conceptualized as religions. Immediately preceding European intervention, "Chinese, Japanese, and Korean people were usually free to believe whatever they wanted to believe as long as they remained loyal to the state and dutiful to their parents and did not challenge or appropriate for themselves the rituals that the state used to legitimize its own authority and preserve social order and harmony."[31]

By the nineteenth century, despite the significant cultural, social, and political differences between East Asian countries, their governments all shared a common struggle to redefine themselves as nation-states in order to fit the emerging *international* global order. Unequal treaties between Western and East Asian states often instantiated these expectations, forcing the latter to conform even more completely to Western standards, including the state's relationship with religions. This, in turn, required an adoption of the Western notion of religion as a category of social and individual life.[32] This necessitated, for instance, a word to be created in Chinese to express the concept of religion: *zongjiao* (literally, "the teaching of the sects.")[33] Meanwhile, religious elites within these countries increasingly relied on the Western-originated language of religious autonomy and the

concept of "freedom of religion" to resist state control. Some, among them Buddhists, began to portray themselves as part of transnational religious traditions in order to draw overseas attention to their conditions and generate foreign pressure against the restrictions of their governments.[34] Simultaneously, Christian missionaries used claims to an inherent right of religious freedom to their advantage as they sought a foothold in these countries. Under pressure from the West, the states there increasingly had to recognize religion as an element of social life that stood apart from their control.[35] All of this meant that religious communities that prominently organized themselves in forms consistent with Western models of religion found more protection than indigenous traditions that were less visible and less conventional. Although Chinese, Japanese, and Korean officials responded to these conditions in different ways, their choices remained constrained by the hegemonic conditions that bound them.

The situation of "religion" in premodern East Asia—as a realm of unfettered practice and belief so long as it did not interfere with the state—echoed the conditions of ancient Rome—where the term *religion* originated, also within the context of empire. There, too, political change led to a reconceptualization of the notion of *religion* that reflected imbalances in power and challenges to non-Christian self-understandings. Before the fourth century, most Romans conceived of *religio* as an inherited practice. Once Christians ascended to political power, they reconceived themselves as part of a religion that reorganized "significant aspects of life under a single, totalized, imperial Christian rubric"[36] that promoted an unusual intolerance based on the notion of a singularly true worship.[37] This impelled them to view non-Christians as sharing similar categories of qualities (e.g., beliefs) while distinguishing themselves as different by the particular nature of those qualities (e.g., belief or disbelief in Christ as God incarnate). Hence, in the context of Christian empire, ancient Christians reconfigured the notion of *religio* to be a system of practices and beliefs to which members voluntarily belonged. They imagined not only Christianity as a religion but Judaism and paganism as well. Yet contemporary rabbis refused to submit to this concept of religion and helped craft a tradition that eschewed the theological uniformity and voluntary membership presumed by the Christian concept.[38] Hence, Jews did not refer to "Judaism" until long after Christians had.[39]

Despite the vast differences between the ancient Roman and modern British empires, in each the intersection of Christianity and empire brought challenges to the self-conception of non-Christian political minorities. While some resisted Christian models, others accommodated their traditions to them. It may be arguable that the Bengali reformer Rammohun Roy's notion of Hindu theology and rites stemming from the belief in a single god as rooted in the Vedas owed more to indigenous than Christian traditions. However, the fact that he described this phenomena as a religion, named it "Hinduism," and became the first Hindu for whom we have recorded use of the term (four decades after its first recorded use by a Briton),[40] suggests that Roy defended his beliefs and practices against missionaries by fitting them into a Christocentric model of religion.

In imagining Hinduism and imagining it as a religion, Roy participated in what Judith Butler calls interpellation. Borrowing the term from Louis Althusser, Butler explains how when one is called a name by someone else, even an injurious name, this act becomes an act of recognition. When one is hailed, the moment demonstrates an inclusion of sorts; "by being called a name, one is also, paradoxically, given a certain possibility of social existence, initiated into a temporal life of language that exceeds the prior purposes that animate that call."[41] Responding to that hail demonstrates agency, although less agency probably than that held by the one who does the hailing and who initiates the naming. Under the mounting conditions of hegemony, Roy (among others) made a choice to respond to the British hailing of "Hinduism." By doing so, he asserted a place for his traditions in the changing conditions of South Asian societies under British influence. The examples in the following chapters demonstrate the interpellation of Europeans to which South Asians, like Roy, responded through acceptance, accommodation, and resistance. Over time, South Asians became increasingly integral to the information projects of the British Empire and participated in this process of calling by name their fellow countrymen and women.

Roy's declaration of Hinduism as a religion returns us to Jonathan Z. Smith's declaration regarding the importance of the word *religion* even when scholars define it with such difficulty. *Religion*, indeed, exists as a scholarly term referencing a vague horizon of phenomena that defy easy classification or even description, given that those within religions often describe those phenomena in vastly divergent ways than scholars of religion. However, Smith goes too far when he asserts, "'Religion' is not a native category. It is not a first-person term of self-characterization. It is a category imposed from the outside on some aspect of native culture. It is the other, in these instances colonialists, who are solely responsible for the content of the term."[42] As we have seen, although the concept of *religion* may have not had precedent in many cultures and Western imperialists had a disproportionate role in its global naturalization, indigenous people played their role in local adoptions and adaptations of the notion. In fact, many members of non-Western religions have argued strenuously for their traditions to be accorded the label "religion" when Westerners have demurred from recognizing them as such. They understand that these traditions accrue a certain status when acknowledged as a religion, as opposed to a superstition, quasi religion, or philosophy. Smith's overall argument serves to defend the scholastic use of the term *religion* against those who would bar it due to the word's Christocentric and Eurocentric inflections.

Caution is certainly due here. But we would double the disempowerment of those cultures upon which *religion* was foisted as an alien concept if we ignore the strategic and tactical uses to which its members appropriated the term and continue to modify and deploy it today. The same applies to the religions that developed in the imperial context, emerging with names previously unused and forms earlier unknown. Labeling these as merely Western constructs reinforces Eurocentric overconfidence in Western-originated disciplines, just as a failure to recognize how much Western Christianity owes its current

forms to European and American engagements with foreign cultures would reinforce Western conceits about the malleability of cultures other than their own. We should no longer be surprised that global phenomena—such as the concept of religion (and science)—are neither inherently universal nor the result of a unidirectional diffusion of European ideas and products. The forces and conditions that have molded and are molding today's globalization involve international networks and intercultural discourses that, while politically asymmetrical, developed through multilateral engagements. Despite the imbalance in political, economic, and cultural power, many South Asians eventually responded to the hail of Europeans in terms of religion. After a while, they hailed Europeans in reply.

## SCIENCE AND SCIENTISM

Nehru's dichotomous characterization of India and the West reflects an assumption central to many British efforts to know India, Indians, and their religions: the perceived contrast between science as the defining quality of British civilization and religion as that of Indian civilization. Certainly, few of Nehru's contemporaries thought India devoid of any indigenous science, but most would have presumed it inferior to British offerings. The equation of a superior "European science" with empirical truth, and the prominence of this science in the social self-imagining of many Britons, challenges us to find a value-neutral term that describes the authoritative place of science in Europe (and later much of the world) without confusing it with the actual operations of those practicing science. So, we need a term that distinguishes between the cultural currency held by the notion of science and the claims made in the name of science. The term *scientism* provides this option.

Our discussion throughout the book will focus more on scientism than science because we care more about the cultural role of the activities organized under the banner of "science" than assessments of the claims made in its name. Moreover *science* is a slippery term that is used confusingly to refer both in a universal way to any branch of knowledge and, in a Eurocentric manner, to the specific methodical forms of knowing conceived (if not gestated) in the West. The ways that Westerners have practiced the empirical study of nature and humanity and the dynamics at work within those practices are not unique; however, by the nineteenth century, the place of science in society was. Describing these studies as *science* runs the risk of either ignoring the significant similarities with parallel practices in other societies or, by recognizing them, overlooking the specific qualities of European science that play so significantly in British encounters in South Asia. *Scientism* refers to this assumption of superiority without making any claims about the actual quality of anyone's science. Hence, the awkwardness of using this relatively rare term is a necessary evil required by our effort to avoid an ethnocentric use of the word *science*.

The term *scientism* helps direct our attention to the ways in which European-originated science has held a hegemonic place in Britain since at least the first third of the nineteenth century. First, Britons had imagined science as a collectivity of unified, yet diverse endeavors to understand the world. The first usage of the term *scientism* in the late nineteenth century referred to just this. Next, many Britons thought their society to be significantly characterized by this science. As such, they understood the predominance of rationalism and empiricism, two of the main elements in the ideology of science, to distinguish their society—not just their sciences—from non-European ones. Finally, most Britons deputed to science the greatest authority in terms of knowledge of the natural and social realms. Instead of the actual activity of scientists, *scientism* refers in this regard to the perception of "the scientific method" as the dominant technique of most, if not all, trustworthy knowing. However, the extent of scientism does not end there.

While Richard King has characterized scientism as "a full-frontal assault on any claim to authority that is not mediated by (what is claimed to be) the experimental methods of the natural sciences,"[43] I would suggest that scientism often exists in society in more subtle ways as well. In addition to the claims to epistemic supremacy made by certain scientific proponents that King rightly notes, I understand scientism to include the high valuation that a society places on science, scientists, and things scientific. This is somewhat akin to what Christopher P. Toumney refers to as the "trivial model" of science. "This model embraced no particular epistemology; it simply judged science in terms of tangible results. There was no end to the images, metaphors, and stereotypes depicting the belief that science deserves respect because it produces prosperity." Toumney's adroit observations of the appropriation of scientific forms and language by Christian Creationists in twentieth century America help us understand the role of scientism in Britain and India where scientific language and symbols (e.g., labs, telescopes, test tubes)[44] also gained a cultural currency that dominated certain realms of social discourse.

The term *scientism* has found currency among those who did not judge the predominance of empirical science in society as a good thing. For instance, F. A. Hayek, writing in 1952, condemns the moment when "the tyranny commenced which the methods and technique of the Sciences in the narrow sense of the term have ever since exercised over the other subjects."[45] Noting the origin of the words "scientism" and "scientistic" from French, Hayek stridently argues for his use of them in discussions concerned "not with the general spirit of disinterested inquiry but with slavish imitation of the method and language of Science."[46] Such critiques did not aim to deride all science, but complained about the surrender of the social sciences to scientistic techniques and discourse when these purportedly ill-suited them. In a more recent instance, John Dupre, penning an essay that protested the capitulation of economics to science, entitled it "Against Scientific Imperialism."[47] This helps remind us that at least two types of critiques have existed that harness the notion of "scientism": those that lament the hegemony of scientism in society in general and those that wish to preserve some fields of knowledge from the "slavish imitation" of empirical science.

*Scientism*, then as I use it, refers to the ascent of Western-originated science as an ideology and as a hegemonic discourse in, first, Western and, then under imperialist impetus, non-Western cultures. Secondarily, it refers to the particular methods, practices, assumptions, and aesthetics that communities under its hegemony associate with the "proper" activity of science, as they understand it. Thus, calling the taxonomical paradigm at work in the Census of India "scientistic" is not to impeach or applaud its accuracy but, rather, is to motion toward the common sets of popular expectations that promote the notion of a coherent, totalistic, and *true* science. This ideology, discourse, and accompanying practices displaced not only most competing systems of knowledge about the natural world, but became the dominant model for almost all forms of knowledge. Although resistance to the rationalism and empiricism of Western-originated science would occasionally flair in Europe and elsewhere among Romantics, Theosophists, Fundamentalists, and others, the fact that many such movements appropriated and altered the language of science to express and legitimate their beliefs demonstrates how pervasive the cultural authority of science had become. In the nineteenth century, it increasingly displaced Christian theology as the foundation of knowing the natural and human worlds among formally educated Europeans. The expansion of public schooling broadened its dominance in Europe and abroad. Ultimately, using Michel Foucault's terms, some of the disciplines of science "mapped" discursive formations that exceeded the boundaries* of those disciplines.[48]

For a great many people around the world today, the emblems of "Western science" appear to be paradigmatic for most, if not all, forms of science. Laboratories, university departments, professional organizations, politically disinterested scientists, and the scientific method all serve as symbols of and expectations for "proper science." Yet, as scholars such as Andrew Cunningham and Perry Williams have shown, these elements did not coalesce in Europe into the form most of us today identify as "modern science" until the nineteenth century. As already mentioned, before this era sciences included those focused on the natural world and others such as rhetoric and theology. In Britain, men like Isaac Newton understood their work as part of "natural philosophy," investigating the natural world in order to better understand its divine creator. Only in the beginning of the nineteenth century did "science" or "the sciences" broadly refer to studies of nature divorced from theology. During this century, disciplines such as biology, geology, sociology, and anthropology emerged and universities, following the German model, built their first established laboratories for scientists.[49] To wit, the word "scientist" did not exist until coined in 1833 by William Whewill.[50] In this work, when I use the terms "science" and "scientific" with neither scare quotes nor adjectives (such as "Vedic"), it is with the understanding that these refer to phenomena created within the Western-dominated discourse regarding methodical study, which is my subject. Their use indicates

* The significance of Foucault's word choice for our topic will become more apparent in the next chapter where we consider maps as scientism's exemplary form of representation.

contemporary perspectives, not definitive claims about what studies do or do not count as "true" science today.

The persistence of Christian influence on investigations of nature in Britain and the hesitancy of the state to involve itself in those efforts meant that the cultural hegemony of science took longer to enroot in Britain than across the Channel. Before this could occur, science had to become autonomous from the theology to which it remained entwined. "Natural Theology . . . became equally the most important organizing idea in British science, shaping a tradition of missionary and vicarage naturalism which stretches into the Victorian era."[51] Indeed, the presidents of the Royal Geographical Society, established in 1830 as one of many learned societies emerging during the Enlightenment, peppered their memoirs and annual addresses with references to natural theology.[52] The conservative reaction to the French Revolution had helped the aristocracy and Church of England entrench more deeply than before. The universities at Oxford and Cambridge reflected this until 1860, with curricula shaped primarily by natural philosophy and intended for gentlemen,[53] some of whom departed after their studies for service in the East India Company. Although Cambridge had nine professorships for mathematics and the sciences in 1800 these, like those few in Oxford, did not require residence at the university and so had relatively little impact on students. However, the tutors in the residential colleges who did most of the teaching—and who all had to be clergy in the Anglican Church—helped promote an interest in natural theology and the natural sciences among both graduates and parishioners alike.[54] Some promoted the sciences because they believed that they, allied with scripture, offered the best defense against superstition and "enthusiasm" (heterodox Christianity).[55]

In contrast, the much earlier establishment of science in secularized universities by French and German governments reflected their more secularist and centralized approach to science. This accelerated the division of natural philosophy into two branches—theology and the natural sciences—while establishing early on a nontheological model of science. But it also made scientists in those countries more reliant on state support and more constrained by state interests. Without the luxury of state contributions, Britons interested in science pursued it at their own cost, limiting it to those with landed wealth and those profiting from burgeoning capitalism and industrialism while leaving them freer of political constraints. As Richard Drayton sums it up, "Curiosity, moral certainty, greed, and patriotism, fused into the restless enthusiasm of the volunteer."[56]

All such conditions, however, did not pertain to the British overseas empire. There, as we shall see in future chapters, the state made important investments in science, encouraging their servants abroad to engage in scientific pursuits or paying for expensive projects such as the Survey of India. William Wilson Hunter, a thirty-year senior veteran of the British Indian government, stated the case baldly in 1887: "Science . . . has overtopped the mountains, spanned the rivers, and pierced the forests which divided kingdom from kingdom. It has thrown down the landmarks of isolation which Nature had set up, and is clasping together with bands of iron the peoples and provinces of a united India."[57]

Military and economic competition with the French propelled much of this, as the cross-Channel rivals dispatched scientific missions across the world that would serve the interests of natural philosophers, military strategists, maritime navigators, and commercial entrepreneurs.[58] Indeed, while the government in England often relied on private cartographers to make maps and even at times to organize surveys, the British Indian government amply funded cartography.[59] Ultimately, Britain's exploratory efforts would surpass those of any other European country.[60]

Thus, science served as an arena of comparison and competition, prompting claims of graduated scientific achievement and civilizational accomplishment—for both Europeans and non-Westerners. Just as surely as the changes in European science relied upon a variety of factors, so too did the gap between Western and non-Western scientific capability. Indigenous epistemes decreasingly suited their practitioners as Western imperial control and hegemonic influence transformed non-Western societies, often through the agency of their members who saw adaptation to Western orders as preferable, profitable, and/or inevitable. Preconquest scientific institutions derived from and suited indigenous conditions. Western dominance altered the structure of these societies and, in doing so, often displaced the significance and utility of earlier epistemic institutions. Meanwhile, local capital tended to be exported and innovation discouraged, thus draining the resources available for supporting autochthonous knowledge projects.[61]

Ultimately, a mixture of coercion and conviction led many non-Westerners to embrace Western science as the path to development, leaving the impression that the West had (the one true) science that others could copy with its patronage. However, historian Gyan Prakash has argued that Western-educated Indian elites did not copy the British but, rather, created a double with a difference, identical to a translation that is neither the original nor uniquely independent.[62] This observation usefully reflects both the asymmetries of imperial power and the realities of South Asian agency. Both the imperatives of understanding Western-originated science in the rapidly changing metropolitan centers of British India and the imperfect fit of new institutions intending to meet those demands were apparent to Syed Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), who established the Aligarh Scientific Society and the first Western-style university in India. He wrote,

> I have been accused by people, who do not understand, of being disloyal to the culture of Islam, even to Islam itself. There are men who say that I have become a Christian. All this I have drawn upon myself because I advocate the introduction of a new system of education which will not neglect the Islamic basis of our culture, nor, for that matter, the teaching of Islamic theology itself, but which will surely take account of the changed conditions of this land. Today there are no Muslim rulers to patronize those who are well versed in the old Arabic and Persian learning. . . .[63]

We must take note of the conflation by some of Syed Ahmed's detractors of British education and Christianity. This accusation, along with Nehru's association of Europe's science with its Protestantism, challenges the secular conceits of the British that their epistemes eschewed the prejudices of religion and relied, instead, on natural reason.

By the end of the nineteenth century, "modern science" (i.e., science practiced by Europeans) became synonymous with "science" in toto. European scientism imparted to the world, through the expediency of empire, a popular image of science that became a model of and a model for the methodical study of the natural, and later social, world for many around the globe. It also embued secular empiricism with the expected potential for social and material improvement.[64] Moreover, as philosopher of science Joseph Rouse notes, science could be used to portray certain politically inflected distinctions made between particular groups as "natural" and, thus, taken as a given (for instance, the differences between tribal and non-tribal Indians).[65] We will examine this model in terms of both the past and present since, ultimately, our goal is to demonstrate how many of the scientistic qualities of the study of India's religions dating to the late eighteenth century continue to characterize scholarship in the twenty-first century.

## THE EMBLEMS OF SCIENCE AND THE IDEOLOGY OF SCIENTISM

As mentioned above, the scientistic model relies upon various emblems of science to symbolize its authority as a form of knowledge. These include a set of methods, practices, institutions, representatives, and publications. "The scientific method," propounded by Francis Bacon (d. 1626), established inductive reasoning from empirical experience as the foundation of a new science. Scientists and science teachers continue to popularly assert that "the scientific method" serves as a singular, universally accepted approach to investigation. It underlies the most visible practices of empirical science: exploration in the field and experimentation in laboratories. Both purportedly seek discoveries that simultaneously advance science and, because of science's presumed beneficence, society. This, in turn, imbues institutions most obviously involved in the practice of science with scientistic authority.

Perhaps the most prominent emblem of science is the laboratory and the observatory because of their establishment purely for empirical observation. Universities and their specialized departments as well as professional scientific organizations (e.g., the Royal Society, the National Geographic Society) also serve as emblems of science because of the authority popularly accorded to them. But institutions also depute authority to specific individuals, both through the credentials granted through training (e.g., a Ph.D.) and through affiliation. Institutions often serve also to produce popularly authoritative communications such as journals, magazines, television programming, and websites. Many scientific societies such as the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS;

f. 1831) and the Aligarh Scientific Society (f. 1864) started publishing journals and/or proceedings of meetings almost immediately after their inception. Even while not meant for a broad audience, these periodicals became popularly authoritative when quoted or referenced in general publications.

Such emblems of science promoted scientism in part because they popularized what had been, in the eighteenth century, an interest in science restricted largely to gentlemen of means (whose investigations often relied upon the work of servants and family members, including women). Societies such as the BAAS advocated for and helped normalize the ideology of science. This was evident in the original goals stated for founding the BAAS: "to give a stronger impulse and a more systematic direction to scientific inquiry; to promote the intercourse of those who cultivate Science in different parts of the British Empire with one another and with foreign philosophers; to obtain more general attention for the objects of Science and the removal of any disadvantages of a public kind that may impede its progress."[66] The aspiration to create "more general attention for the objects of Science" relates the popular, scientistic ambitions of the BAAS. Moreover, the statement makes apparent the constitutive elements of the ideology of scientism: a uniform notion of science, the universality of science, a teleology of progress, and conformity with liberal values. Examining each in detail offers important insights into the phenomena that will be the focus of subsequent chapters.

1. "Science." The sciences that scientism celebrates are presumed to share certain characteristics. This makes it possible to speak, as the BAAS declaration does, of "Science" in the singular. Despite the diversity of realms of inquiry, the sciences are supposed to form inherently a collectivity. Although scientists and scholars of science have questioned the unity of science, a popular sentiment remains that all of the sciences enjoy a single scientific method reliant on empirical observation and a unified scientific community. It is expected that the findings of one science will confirm the laws of nature or humanity discovered by another because they all describe the same empirical reality, albeit through different approaches.[67]

The "true" scientist investigates natural or human phenomena in an objective manner, avoiding her subjective concerns. Proponents of scientism commonly view quantified data as most objective and most authoritative, assuming that natural facts can be described mathematically.[68] The gradation of respectability often found among scientists and the public from the most scientistically certain, "hard" sciences (such as physics, chemistry, and biology) to the less convincing, "soft" sciences (such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology) appears to be a function, in part, of ranking the sciences with the most completely quantifiable data.

Scientism also implies that science has the ability to explain all perceivable phenomena, given enough time and resources. Ultimately, all nonscientific explanations of the world

(e.g., theology) will surrender to superior, scientific elucidations.[69] Once science achieved this popular assumption, it truly had displaced Christian theology, not only in terms of social authority, but in terms of its recognition as a totalizing worldview capable of revealing the ultimate ordering principles of nature and humanity—a recognition that theology had enjoyed in medieval Europe.

Finally, scientism implies a shared classificatory urge that systematically differentiates individual specimen into discrete categories. All phenomena can and must be classified because the failure to categorize specimen that do not fit existing categories or, as in the case of the panda and platypus, appear to fit more than one puts into question the entire system of taxonomy. Chapter 2 will illustrate more completely these assumptions of interconnectivity, objectivity, quantification, totalization, and classification using the example of cartography, perhaps the most fundamentally trusted expression of scientism.

2. "To promote the intercourse of those who cultivate Science in different parts of the British Empire with one another and with foreign philosophers." Among those who view science as a uniformly singular collectivity, there are many who believe in the universality of scientific pursuits. Scientistic discourse when referring to an unqualified "Science" commonly intends to connote "Western science" or "modern science." When denoting a non-Western science, an adjective provides ethnic or religious qualification: "Mayan science," "Chinese science," "Islamic science." For some, science not only serves as a central quality of civilization, it is synonymous with it, distinguishing the civilized from the primitive and barbarous. Writing from this perspective, historian of science Joseph Needham entitled his influential study that he began in the 1930s *Science and Civilisation in China*.[70]

This recognition of a global diversity of forms of science did not threaten the superiority of Western-originated science since few suggested that another system of science more successfully explained the world. In fact, the presumed universality of science allowed another plane of comparison that affirmed Western superiority over all others. It is not clear that the BAAS statement implies such a universalist view of science. However, its global ambitions certainly hint, at least, at a potential universality of an imperially communicable and cross-culturally suitable science.

3. "Removal of any disadvantages of a public kind that may impede its progress." The BAAS statement recognizes the possibilities of both positive change and of public obstruction to it. Westerners who believe in scientific progress—the third element in the ideology of scientism—usually establish a narrative of development that posits "their" science as the most methodical, most accurate, and most advanced. Implicitly or explicitly, other epistemes are qualitatively ranked along various developmental stages relative to their resemblance to Western-originated

> science: the more the similitude, the higher the ranking. Progress assumes a singular road of development leading inexorably to "modern science" (i.e., the set of disciplines normative for contemporary Europeans). The theme of progress, so engrained in the legitimation and authorization of scientism, has led many scientists to portray the development of their disciplines as a continual march forward, culminating in the successes of present science. The myth of scientific progress, like the myths found in nationalist historiographies, must imbue its narrative with a sense of inevitability in order to valorize the present and deny the possibility of any equal alternative. It represents Western-originated science as the furthest along a singular highway leading to greater advance and better understanding.

Oddly enough, progress celebrates the normative scientific establishment as "solid," "sound," and "reliable" while depicting it as the result of incessant change and expecting its leaders to make significant contributions that will change it in the future. Philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn drew attention to this tension between the ideal of science constantly opening new frontiers of knowledge and the actual engagement of most scientists in what he termed "normal science." In normal science, scientists work to fit their observations to the dominant paradigm because only by doing so can their observations gain legitimacy. For instance, few if any biologists today seek to demonstrate that the model of genetic hereditary transmission through DNA is wrong but, rather, work to demonstrate how their observations fit that model. Scientific revolutions, he argues, occur *in spite of* the efforts made in everyday science, not as a result of them. Thus, Kuhn asserted, the historical formation of this science can never be anything but random with unexpected changes in directions, plenty of dead ends, and more than a few wrecks. Nevertheless, those within the dominant scientific paradigm see their science as the result of successive realizations of truth. Earlier efforts that moved in directions different than the ones leading to the current normative paradigm are seen as wrong turns. Alternative approaches to explanation (e.g., alchemy, creation science) generally appear as odd, illegitimate diversions.[71]

Nonnormative forms of knowledge, therefore, often appear "imprecise," "outmoded," or, less generously, "backward" or "primitive." So engrained can the teleology of scientific progress be that it becomes difficult to compare knowledge systems without judging them according to their place on the supposed road to discovery. Notice, for instance, how "science" for most English speakers denotes implicitly a very specific set of sciences that I qualify in this volume as "Western-originated science." In the West, astrology seldom gets included in this set and, when described as a science, often suffers harnessing to adjectives that degrade it to "pseudo" science or "voodoo" science.[†] This returns us to

[†] The choice of "voodoo" as a signifier is itself reflective of scientistic perspectives given the term's association among many Anglophones with exoticism, superstition, and inferior religion.

the need for a term like *scientism* to differentiate the operations of sciences from the normative, hegemonic position those sciences attain in certain cultures.

4. "To give a stronger impulse and a more systematic direction to scientific inquiry." The final element of the ideology of scientism involves a set of liberal, Enlightenment values that form the basis of systematic investigation by scientists: individualism, rationalism, and objectivity. The basis of scientistic empiricism rests on independent, individualistic knowing. Despite the critical role authority plays in the legitimation of scientists and their work (as demonstrated in our discussion of the emblems of scientism) and the importance of learned communities for the individual's success, the ideal of the individual pursuing truth without deference to established authorities remains salient. One only need recall the popular hagiographies of Galileo, Columbus, and Darwin to recognize how the credentials of each as a scientific discoverer are established in no small part by their willingness to run counter to the dictates (if not oppressions) of contemporary authorities. Furthermore, they supposedly attained their positions as experts in the scientistic pantheon not by dint of hereditary position but on the basis of their own merit (the importance of hereditary wealth or others' labor in supporting research seldom figures into such hagiographies). The individual's success against traditional authorities valorizes her ability to draw conclusions from observations of nature based on her faculties of reason rather than received, untested wisdom. Thus, such narratives helped project not only the ideal of individualism but also the value of rationalism.

Science, Foucault writes, "provided a model of rationality."[72] Ideally, with reason as its basis, scientific endeavor remains beyond the influence of nonrational impulses brought about by emotions, intuition, and sensuality.[73] This, in turn, imbues science with its reputed objectivity. Few today may believe still that pure objectivity can be achieved, but it remains an important horizon toward which scientists strive to orient themselves. Not only should, in the popular mind, the scientist be disconnected from his nonrational self, but, ideally, his results should be value-free and divorced from political or social interests.[74] The testable facts of science are contrasted with the subjective interpretations of the arts and humanities.[75] In gradually secularizing Western societies during the last two centuries, as scientism's influence expanded, religion's realm supposedly contracted to the subjective sphere of personal morality. The values religion imparted became more associated with the realm of interpretation and, thus, less associated with the supposed facts of science. Scientism did not necessitate atheism or antagonism to religion (although plenty of its devotees and enemies have argued otherwise), but its proponents increasingly have considered Christianity to be irrelevant to the operations of science.[76] Moreover, scientism became linked with antitraditionalist and anticlerical movements.[77]

Beyond individualism, rationalism, and objectivity, scientism also has drawn upon and promoted the liberal social values of "free enquiry, meritocratic expert government and material progress."[78] As we shall see in the forthcoming chapters, due to these associations, scientism would be co-opted into the legitimation of various governments, government policies, and capitalist endeavors. Once again we emphasize that these are popular presumptions whose realization in the actual workings of science has been doubted by many scientists and disproven by many scholars. They serve only as ideals that compose the ideology of scientism despite the failure of operational sciences to perfectly realize any of them. In fact, inconsistencies, discontinuities, and ruptures characterize the everyday practice of scientism's science. Nevertheless, these elements powerfully inform the rhetoric and self-conception of scientism that, since its flowering in nineteenth-century Europe, has spread globally and continues to be a matter of faith for a great many scientists and laypeople alike. These included, of course, Nehru: "Who indeed could afford to ignore science today? At every turn we seek its aid... The future belongs to science and to those who make friends with science."[79]

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTISTIC DISCIPLINES, TAXONOMY, AND COMPARISON

Having outlined briefly the development of the category of religion and the dynamics of scientism, we are almost ready for our task of investigating their intersections in British India as expressed in the history of representations of the villages around Chainpur. However, the texts, images, and statistics generated at these intersections took form and found an audience in the context of a changing organization of knowledge in Britain and South Asia. Central to this stood not only "science" and scientism but also "the sciences": increasingly specialized disciplines of knowledge. By the Victorian era, "science" meant the systematic collection, classification, and analysis of data. Disciplines formed as a response to and propagation of the urge to systematize. Each of the chapters that follow locates Chainpur's representations as so many moments in the gradual coalescence of a discipline. The travellers, surveyors, artists, officials, and census enumerators involved may not have recognized their role in contributing to what would become cartography, anthropology, demographics, ethnology, folklore, archaeology, and the history of religions. Yet, because current perspectives on the role of religion in South Asia resulted from the centrality of religion in many disciplines, it will be useful to track the formation of these disciplines in their British Indian setting, though without attempting a complete history of each. The final act of our prelude to those chapters, therefore, requires that we contextualize these coalescing specializations within a brief but larger history of disciplinary knowledge in the West. This requires a consideration of the co-dependence between the growth of imperialism and the development of disciplines, the distinctive

quality of disciplines, and the formation of new systems of information (especially taxonomies) to serve these disciplines.

Of course, South Asian knowledge systems had served people of the subcontinent long before European imperialism, and innumerable Indians played a crucial role in fashioning representations of their societies and religions during British rule. However, those who most persuasively wrought the modern view of India as a primarily religious country insolvably split between Hindus and Muslims worked within a system of knowledge largely shaped by models originating in the West and generally controlled by Westerners. While many proponents of this view were South Asian and/or derived their evidence from local informants and indigenous sources, they did not often adopt wholly autochthonous forms of knowledge to express their findings, nor did these appear to substantially influence the coalescence of the disciplines that did. This was not due to any "lack" in South Asian cultures (of rational inquiry, for instance) as some authors have claimed; their contributions, among many others, of trigonometry and the concept of zero—so influential in Europe and elsewhere—makes this clear. Moreover, the British appropriated certain indigenous information systems (for example, land measurement), as we shall see. Nevertheless, the hegemony of Western-originated systems reflects the epistemic dominance that accompanied military, economic, and political control. This is not to argue, however, that the British simply imposed their European-manufactured forms of knowledge on passive South Asian subjects; many Indians responded to the reordering of knowledge not with acceptance but through accommodation or resistance. The prominent careers of plant physiologist Jagadis Chandra Bose (d. 1937),[80] chemist Prafulla Chandra Ray (d. 1944), and physician G. Srinivasa Murti (d. 1962)[81] amply evidenced such accommodations, while the heightened activity in Ayurvedic and Yunani medicine—long practiced on the subcontinent—demonstrated a resistance to the introduction of European forms of allopathic medicine.

But the co-dependence between imperialism and disciplinary development expressed itself not just among empire's foreign subjects. Most Western disciplines took shape in the imperial context and their histories are inseparable from the history of empire, even though the historiography devoted to them too seldom has recognized this. In any European nation, advances in science and technology and changes in views of humanity accrued from knowledge projects essential for competition with other European powers. Naval supremacy, commercial expansion, industrial dominance, and military rivalry all demanded new information about the world—natural and human—in order to better navigate, negotiate, subjugate, produce, and destroy. Expanding commerce helped finance knowledge projects: foreign profits subsidized institutions at home such as university libraries and learned societies. Imperial trade also provided both the finances and labor that made possible the investigations of overseas British officials and colonists. As historian Richard Drayton notes of the situation in the American colonies, this involved "Unnamable Africans, whose labor made possible the philosophical leisure of [Thomas] Jefferson and [Bryan] Edwards."[82] The empire provided a massive labor pool from which administrators

drew—by coercion and inducement—untold numbers of slaves, servants, informants, and officials who served as direct participants in and contributors to British projects, although they were seldom recognized in reports. Given that at any one time there were probably never more than 100,000 Britons in India (in comparison with 287 million Indians in 1891),[83] most of the work of observation, measurement, and recording relied upon South Asians, although most of the final maps, pictures, reports, and publications that reached the public bore the names of European authors (this lessened over time).

Empire also offered opportunities for Britons to make their reputations as specialists through study abroad. Sir William Jones (d. 1794), as a judge for the East India Company, learned Persian and Sanskrit, which prompted his breakthrough observations on the similarities of Indic, Iranian, and European languages. Sir Joseph Banks (d. 1820)—whose own status as a botanist was greatly furthered by his service as naturalist aboard Captain James Cook's first Pacific voyage—instituted a system of dispatching naturalists with naval surveying operations. Thus employed, Charles Darwin (d. 1882), Joseph Hooker (d. 1911), and T. H. Huxley (d. 1895) made observations abroad that became the foundation of their scientific eminence at home.[84] Meanwhile, the East India Company promoted itself as a supporter of science and its servants vied for Company patronage, even if they often found it inadequate.[85]

Drayton has also noted that empire made not only European careers but even whole disciplines possible or, at least, more convincing by making accessible a global variety of observable phenomena. Perhaps theoretical mathematics or physics might have succeeded in a purely domestic setting because of their limited requirements for diverse samples. However, other disciplines dealt with phenomena that required a wide divergence in places for observation (e.g., astronomy), for samples of speciation (e.g., biology), or for examples of chronological stages (e.g., geology). For instance, parts of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia* relied on astronomy executed on American soil.[86] Darwin and his contemporaries depended on a global network of collectors who furnished samples of fauna and flora unavailable at home. In the mid-nineteenth century, Britain's eminent botanist William Hooker maintained an impressive collection of correspondents in India despite the fact that he never had visited there. Not only did he receive specimens from these men, but he also worked to further cultivate their botanical interests since many of them had to eke out collecting time from their service as imperial or colonial officials. However, these positions—for which they owed their stations abroad—often offered access to indigenous labor, upon whom they relied to gather specimens and create illustrations.[87]

Scientific interests among imperial officials undoubtedly shaped how they performed their duties. As philosopher of science Joseph Rouse emphasizes, science required certain "habits of mind and body" that made its practice possible. In order to participate in a coalescing community of science, the individual required command of particular forms of reading and writing, perception, classification, and instrument use as well as perhaps drawing and mathematics.[88] Results could only be communicated within a community

sharing a common literacy for the representations created. The urge to amass "curiosities" and maintain collections by traveling Europeans and their families suggests an early phase of this disciplining as individual items were obtained, labeled, and preserved, as we shall see in the discussion regarding humanist travellers in chapter 4. Gradually, the British Indian state initiated various official knowledge projects that relied on this discipline and produced published results that fed the informational needs of coalescing disciplines. Imperialism, then, facilitated the development of disciplines shaped by a rising scientism even as it benefited from the knowledge productions of those disciplines.

But what do we mean when we refer to "a discipline"? Certainly Max Weber signaled the significance of the term in European notions of science when he commented that "only by strict specialization can the scientific worker become fully conscious, for once and perhaps never again in his lifetime, that he has achieved something that will endure. A really definitive and good accomplishment is today always a specialized accomplishment."[89] Every scientistic discipline is a self-regulating community that creates specialized knowledge through the use of a delimited range of methods and theories. Understanding the qualities and dynamics of disciplines helps us understand not only their formation but also their impact in British India.

The gradual coalescence of disciplines in the nineteenth century began with the widening success of what we recognize today as "science" in gaining autonomy as an independent field of inquiry. The trajectory of this independence can be traced from the medieval period (when European sciences lacked cohesion or organizing principles and served as "handmaidens of theology")[90] through to the rise of empiricism (which helped foster the natural philosophy of the seventeenth century) to the establishment of natural science (once science gained sufficient epistemic authority).[91] As origin myths tend to do, the popular narrative of "The Scientific Revolution" reflects many of the qualities by which scientific communities and scientistic societies prefer to characterize themselves. For instance, this narrative describes both Sir Francis Bacon (d. 1626) imparting the method of inductive reasoning reputedly central to science and Robert Boyle (d. 1691) establishing the conventions for interactions of experimental philosophers with one another, claiming each as the "father of the experimental way of life."

Such myths silently celebrate Renaissance individualism and Christian asceticism more than they reflect the social conditions that make most scientific successes possible. Popular portrayals of individual thinkers acting as lone champions of knowledge living austere lives devoted to their vocation rely on a characterization (praised by Boyle) that has far more in common with depictions of Christian heroes—based on the archetypal life of Jesus—than with the actual practice of most scientists.[92] These narratives omit the importance of scientific communities that did so much to support and encourage, first, science and, then, its fragmentation into disciplines. For instance, the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge served a critical role in helping to define and promote what would become a professionalized scientific community. Proponents of science took another step toward winning autonomy when they placed particular

importance on mathematical data, analysis, and results, increasing the distance from theology and further limiting those who could participate.[93]

By the second third of the nineteenth century, disciplines began to exist as distinct social formations in parts of Europe. That is to say, sciences had become professionalized and self-regulated,[94] no longer characterized by the "gentlemanly specialists" who dominated until then. Opportunities to be a scientist (the word now having been coined) became less restricted to those who could rely on private wealth to pursue their interests and increasingly relied on institutional, industrial, and government support. Science, therefore, became less tied to the landed wealth that sustained the earlier gentlemanly specialists and more integrated into the increasingly pervasive capitalist and industrialist sectors of European societies and their imperial dominions. Some governments began to develop specialized departments reliant on disciplines, such as geographical survey offices. The growing self-sustenance and independence of these disciplines was evidenced by the transition from learned societies of general scientific interest (the model of which the Royal Society founded) to specialized societies. Despite opposition from bulwarks of the older naturalist order such as Sir Joseph Banks, scientists established the Geological Society of London (f. 1807), the Zoological Society (f. 1826), and the Chemical Society (f. 1840). These professional societies served as gatekeepers and agents that authenticated the credentials of scientists[95] (especially at a time when science had yet to figure significantly into the Oxbridge curriculum), while also supporting the scientific endeavors of imperial and colonial officials serving abroad. Inherently this regulation of entry into disciplines involved class[96] and gender restrictions.

As Foucault famously has argued, academic disciplines create disciplined knowledge: knowledge that ideally accords with a particular realm and methods of investigation. He explains, "Disciplines are defined by groups of objects, methods, their corpus of propositions considered to be true, the interplay of rules and definitions, of techniques and tools."[97] Thus, disciplinarity means standardization, to some degree. The professionalized community agrees (even if without consensus) on standards of observation, experimentation, and representation, regulating how each science is practiced and who practices it. It also determines how to train students in that discipline. Part of the standardized practice involves the public presentation of procedures and findings, thereby suggesting a shift from the private space of the gentleman's home to the public square.[98] However, philosopher of science Donna Haraway has demonstrated that the constraints placed on entry to and participation in scientific practice significantly diminish the supposedly public quality of science. For instance, the Royal Society excluded all women from membership since its founding in 1660 until 1945.[99] Professionalization and self-regulation limits who is recognized as competent to substantiate or challenge results.

This limitation of access also arises in the standardization of information systems developed in league with disciplines. Statistics, modern cartography, and scientific taxonomy represent but some of the innovative information systems developed and standardized to fulfill increasingly diverse disciplinary needs. But the expanding divergence

among these systems has led to strictly partitioned types of information that are categorized by discipline, as nearly any set of library shelves will testify.[100] Although standardization had been intended to ease access to information, accelerating specialization of disciplines with particularized technical vocabulary and peculiar methodological approaches has had an adverse impact, leading nonspecialists to find the results of many of these disciplines unintelligible.[101] So, the regularization of information systems may make disciplinary knowledge more understandable, but the specialized education required to interpret the resulting information necessarily limits who is literate in the discipline.

Finally, disciplines have often established a narrative of improvement. As suggested in the story of the Scientific Revolution, the sciences relate their own myths of origin. As Kuhn has elaborated, sciences tend to posit a seemingly singular, linear progress of historical inevitability that culminates in the contemporary understanding of the phenomena under their consideration. Textbooks commonly communicate this view of disciplines despite the findings of historians of science that suggest a far more multilateral, unstable, and discontinuous set of changes.[102] The linear narrative of progress highlights particularly eminent contributors and seminal contributions as identified by those most influential in the discipline: Galileo, Copernicus, and Chandrasekhar for astronomy; Newton, Planck, and Einstein for physics; and Darwin, Mendel, and Watson and Crick for biology (the prevalent omission of Rosalind Franklin reflects the earlier point about gender restrictions).

As Pierre Boudieu suggests, a discipline, in sum, comprises the limited audience that can understand the results of specialized investigations as expressed in disciplinary language.[103] As they coalesced in the nineteenth century, scientific disciplines were characterized as professionalized, self-limiting and self-regulating social bodies that became increasingly integrated in and reliant upon social elements such as institutions, industry, and government. Admission into a discipline required an education in the standardized procedures of the community that purported to exist in and serve the public realm but whose practices increasingly defied public access and understanding. Disciplinary communities contributed to the socialization of its adepts by maintaining narratives of their formation that projected their ideals onto past exemplars while valorizing contemporary models. A negative example will perhaps help illustrate these points.

By the beginning of the second third of the nineteenth century, statistical societies thrived in many of Britain's industrial cities. These launched empirical surveys of certain parts of their urban society and of communities nearby. They intended that the resulting statistic information would self-evidently point the way for social reform. As one scholar describes it, these researches represented an "empirical sociology in embryo." However, this community of learned societies did not crystallize into a successful discipline because many of the critical components of disciplines mentioned above did not gel. For instance, members of these societies failed to build on one another's developments. Not only did later researchers unknowingly "discover" innovations in methodology already proposed

by earlier ones, but no one had a sense of progress or improvement in their field because no established set of disciplinary principles or methods provided some notion of common ideals or goals by which to measure success. Researchers often also replicated the survey work of predecessors, eschewing the opportunity to build on previous collected materials. Generally, the members of these statistical societies sought social reform and saw statistics as a short-term means to an end, not as a field of knowledge around which a community needed to establish a shared set of practices, standards, and visions. Hence, by the end of the 1840s, this empirical social research ebbed and all but one of the provincial statistical societies dissolved.[104] Although, later, statistics and sociology developed into disciplines, these erstwhile statistical societies were not direct contributors.

The social science disciplines that did come into fruition had their germination in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as Westerners began to include humanity within the realm of the new empirical science. This involved efforts to determine laws governing human phenomena using empirical evidence.[105] Just as the positing of universally applicable laws of physics required the presumption that the physical world had certain uniform characteristics that made evident the pervasiveness of those laws, so the effort to determine universal laws among humans presumed a universal rationality and shared human nature,[106] two key assumptions of the Enlightenment.[107] So, for instance, *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith (d. 1790) postulated that each society exists according to a political economy determined by the twin drives of human nature: reason and a quest for self-improvement.[108] This and Smith's other observations about economic behavior signaled the separation of economic studies from moral science. Auguste Comte (d. 1857) helped accomplish the same for the sociology he founded, while anthropology and psychology became established at about the same time.[109] Darwin, of course, evoked enduring condemnation from some quarters when he applied the laws of natural selection to humanity and, thus, challenged the biblically determined place of Eve's children in much of Christian moral theology.

A discipline that posits natural laws or a shared human nature inherently seeks to account for and compare the diverse manifestations of those laws. If, for instance, natural selection operates as a common law of nature, then tracking the separate evolution of finches, platypuses, and zebra fish requires a tool to recognize their differences, determine their relationship with one another, and allow for their comparison. Taxonomy provides this tool. Classification of individual phenomena allows them to be sorted according to their differences (bird, mammal, fish), but it also presumes that the members of a category are similar to one another due to some characteristic or set of characteristics (feathers, fur, scales). In other words, disciplines strategically manage comparison through classificatory systems that establish a basis for *knowing* and *organizing* similarity and difference. As a prelude to subsequent chapters that gradually explore the dynamics of classification more closely and trace the place of religion as a category among the coalescing disciplines, a preliminary sketch of the impulse to establish categories of similarity and differentiation follows.

Due to their co-origination, imperialism, scientific disciplines, and scientific classification worked in mutually informative and supportive ways. The gathering flood of data accruing through exploration of distant environments and engagements with foreign cultures not only facilitated the development of disciplines, as we saw above, but also demanded new systems of classification in order to reduce the increasingly unmanageable number of reported phenomena, specimens, and individuals into distinct categories.

This put into final crisis Aristotle's classification system for animals, which had dominated European thinking until the Renaissance and still influenced some when the great taxonomist Carolus Linnaeus (d. 1778) commenced his work. The Aristotelian system assumed that each class of living thing had some essential quality that distinguished it from others. As Foucault explains, "Every being bore a mark, and the species was measured by the extent of a common emblem. So that each species identified itself by itself, expressed it individually independent of all the others." Any other difference, if unrelated to this essence, was irrelevant.[110] Therefore, classification relied upon the intuited recognition of the inherent nature of a thing. But the flood of new species brought to Western attention through expansive commerce and empires overwhelmed attempts to reveal such completely individual essences. As we shall see in more detail in Interlude Three, classification systems that the emerging disciplines developed in the course of the last few centuries relied on *observable* features which, when various species are compared, allowed for some notion of commonality and, even, relation.[111]

Western engagements abroad required a universally applicable classificatory regimen in order to intellectually and/or politically manage the human diversity encountered globally. In other words, political rule of foreign societies required understanding their underlying systems of social organization (which presumed that such systems existed or should exist as rationalized orders). Science seemed well suited to the task and was pressed into service. As Müller observed, "An empirical acquaintance with facts rises to a scientific knowledge of facts as soon as the mind discovers beneath the multiplicity of single productions the unity of an organic system."[112] As social science disciplines evolved from the mere observation of various peoples to the analysis of their organization, each relied on the identification of some quality presumably shared by humanity that could be effectively subdivided into meaningful units. Anthropology investigated physiology and culture, sociology examined communities, economics studied the exchange of wealth, et cetera. Adam Smith subdivided his category of investigation, political economy, into four subcategories when he described the four stages of social organization among which all humans divide. Müller (d. 1900), often identified as the founder of comparative studies in religion, propounded the universality of religion[113] and its division into three stages of development: henotheism, polytheism, and monotheism.[114] In his *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, delivered in 1878, he referred to the classificatory regimen of a physical science in order

to justify his reliance on Indian literature. "Instead of trying to study the origin of religion in the tertiary or quaternary strata of Africa, America and Australia, it seems far wiser to look first to countries where we find, not only the latest formations, but where we can see and study some at least of the lower strata on which the superficial soil of religion reposes."[115] Like geology, the comparative study of religion would become a discipline that depended on a world of data. In making this comparison, Müller used scientism to validate a feature in his study of religions. We will find this strategy repeated in forthcoming chapters.

Among others, S. N. Balagangadhara has decried the presumption of Müller and others that religion is a universal category. Given our earlier deliberations on the Christocentric genesis of the term and the lack of similar terms in most societies, we can understand the need to challenge its wholesale, uncritical application. However, if we dismiss all categorical presumptions of universality that have served Westerners in their attempts to understand others yet had not been shared by them before imperial contact, can we justify the continued use of categorical terms such as *culture*, *economy*, *society*, *class*, *ritual*, *myth*, and *folklore*? Have not Eurocentric ideas inherent in these presumably universal or near-universal social elements led at times to the distorted depiction of non-Western peoples? As already noted, disciplines such as anthropology, economics, sociology, and folklore studies have developed around the presumption of the universality regarding one or more of these human qualities exactly as the history of religions has coalesced around the assumption of a widespread phenomena called "religion." Whereas the intricate critique of Balagangadhara and others regarding Western applications of the term to non-Western contexts must be engaged, we cannot reject the term *religion* simply because of its Western origin or claims to its universality (which need not be accepted in order to use the term). This would be to reject the important ways in which the word's meaning has evolved in scholarship, shedding many of its Christian assumptions in ways that place Christianity into a more exacting comparative context.

Although we need not agree with Müller's conclusion about the universality of religion, for the sake of our interest in the development of disciplines, we take note again both that he is considered "the father of comparative religion"[116] and that his effort to classify religious phenomena according to stages of development relied on materials collected in British India. The discipline that developed for the scientistic study of religion (known variously as "comparative religion" or "the history of religions") has traditionally drawn disproportionately from South Asian examples while also borrowing the conclusions, methods, and theories from other social sciences. This was possible because among the organizing categories deployed by each discipline—in both its embryonic and more developed forms—in British India, the category of religion often figured significantly.

Paradoxically, throughout the long transition from a theologically informed view of humanity to one defined by empirical science, religion remained a marker of

difference for Britons in their perception of South Asians. At first, Britons differentiated themselves from Indians by the nature of the religions they respectively served. Later, many Britons emphasized religiousness as a characteristic that differentiated Indians from British secularity and rationality. The following chapters will demonstrate this shift in the context of specific disciplinary developments, as well as how religion figured as a central comparative category in most of these coalescing disciplines.

First, we will examine how most of the first, as well as many of the later, British travel accounts of India derived from and reinscribed Christian theologcal categories. Increasingly, the genre of travel writing relied upon a claim to authority based on empirical objectivity. Before exploring this turn, however, we must consider the claims to totalized knowledge implicit in such endeavors as the mapping of India. This ideal would influence various surveys of India—from the first land surveys of the eighteenth century to the revenue surveys of the nineteenth—and further instantiate "religious" as a primary classification marker of the peoples of South Asia. From the late nineteenth century on, European disciplines would quickly begin to coalesce, resulting in demographics, archaeology, ethnology, linguistics, and, finally for our purposes, the study of religion. Applied to India and Indians, these disciplines would consistently take religion as a marker of difference: a qualitative difference separating Indians from Britons, and an antagonistic difference among Indians themselves.

In almost each instance, British disciplines in South Asia evolved, at first, with some reliance on indigenous systems of knowledge. Once each crystallized into a more systematized, disciplinary form and established regular connections to European institutions of learning, these disciplines slowly severed their connections with Indian forms of knowing and their practitioners. The overall British episteme increasingly *processed* local knowledge by resituating it from its original context and distilling it into a form that fit increasingly regularized systems of imperial knowledge. Such systems were regularized not only in Britain but among other European countries, resulting in their global (though not universal) adoption through the conduit of Western imperialism and hegemony. This meant that Britons and Indians assimilated local knowledge and synthesized it to fit universal categories and allow global comparisons, seemingly reducing local systems of knowledge to a provincial status increasingly irrelevant even in India. This process shifted British knowledge more toward the situation described by Edward Said when he wrote with some overstatement that European imperialists saw their "Oriental" subjects as capable of offering only data; European specialists alone offered information.[117] It is in this context that the centrality of religion for the British in their domestic self-understanding and global classification came to be "proven" by native informants and reinscribed by emerging disciplines, while Britons increasingly disregarded the local forms of knowledge in which the pre-processed data originally had meaning.

## CONCLUSION

Where we are left, then, after our deliberations on the concept of *religion*, the difference between science and scientism, and the place of religion within scientistic disciplines, perhaps is summed up best by Bourdieu: "Scientists are never the 'singular geniuses' that hagiographic history makes of them: they are collective subjects which, in the form of incorporated collective history, actualize all the relevant history of their science—I am thinking for example of Newton or Einstein—and who work within collectives with instruments that are themselves objectified collective history."[118] If exemplary scientists exist as such collective subjects, how much more so, in terms of our topic, those who represented Chainpur on behalf of various information orders during the Raj. Indeed, their tools—curiosity closets, measuring chains, *camera obscura,* enumeration pigeonholes—belong to a collective history. But as Donna Haraway reminds us, the products of science are also part of that collective history. The travelogues, reports, maps, paintings, and statistics that fashioned verbal, visual, and mathematical images of Chainpur draw the village into the collective history of the forms of knowledge used to represent it and its people. Of course, Chainpur never was just a representation any more than were India and Indians. And the impact of those representations on the village remains difficult to measure. But the nature of those representations, with religion persistently serving as a central organizing category, certainly influenced British perspectives and policies as well as the self-perceptions and plans of Indians. In order to challenge the depiction of India as a fundamentally religious country, perennially rent by Hindu-Muslim antipathies, we must understand the foundations of these views in theology, anthropology, cartography, demographics, folklore studies, archaeology, and the history of religions as well as the less formal forms of knowledge that foreshadowed them.

> The Ganges, though flowing from the foot of Vishnu and through Shiva's hair, is not an ancient stream. Geology, looking further than religion, knows of a time when neither the river nor the Himalayas that nourish it existed, and an ocean flowed over the holy places of Hindustan. The mountains rose, their debris silted up the ocean, the gods took their seats on them and contrived the river, and the India we call immemorial came into being. But India is really far older. In the days of the prehistoric ocean the southern part of the peninsula already existed, and the high places of Dravidia have been land since land began, and have seen on the one side the sinking of a continent that joined them to Africa, and on the other the upheaval of the Himalayas from a sea. They are older than anything in the world. No water has ever covered them, and the sun who has watched them for countless aeons may still discern in their outlines forms that were his before our globe was torn from his bosom. If flesh of the sun's flesh is to be touched anywhere, it is here, among the incredible antiquity of these hills.
>
> —E. M. FORSTER, *A Passage to India* (1924), 109.

# 2

# Cartography, the Ideal of Science, and the Place of Religion

OF ALL THE subjects that drove British information projects in India, perhaps none—other than Indians themselves—mattered as much as land. Its form shaped military policy. Its fertility determined what revenue could be extracted from farmers. Its variability influenced the establishment of roads, telegraph lines, railroads, and other lines of transport and communication. Its qualities decided the profitability of growing jute and cotton for England's mills, tea and sugarcane for European palates, and opium for Chinese pipes. No surprise, then, that in E. M. Forster's highly nuanced portrait of British Indian life, geography exerts a powerful presence. The description above introduces the part of the novel that includes its most dramatic scene, which takes place in a cave of the Himalayan foothills.* The allegation of rape pits Dr. Aziz's narrative against Miss

* Recent scholarship has suggested that the artificial caves of Bihar's Barabar Hills, visited by Forster in 1913, served as the author's inspiration for his "Marabar Hills." See Mukherjee 1966 and Moran 1988.

Quested's, echoing Forster's earlier juxtaposition of a very different set of narratives regarding the mountain range's formation: one of religion and the other of science. The first Forster signifies implicitly as Hindu through references to Vishnu and Shiva, while the second he identifies explicitly as geological with allusion to current theory. Forster casts religion and science as actors that look and know, drawing conclusions in conflict with one another. While the Hindu view originates from and is identified with the land Forster describes, geology has no such local affiliation, and is seemingly just so.

We might not be surprised that a twentieth-century educated Briton like Forster would favor a Western scientific explanation over an Indian religious view. However, his juxtaposition of these two narratives evidences an assumption central to many British efforts to know India, Indians, and their religions: the perceived contrast between science as the defining quality of British civilization and religion as that of Indian civilization. Certainly few of Forster's contemporaries thought indigenous science absent in India, but most would have presumed it inferior to British offerings. Although Forster's novel hardly promotes British triumphalism, he unreflexively asserts the superiority of (European) geology ("looking further"). So convincing did most Westerners find their sciences that over time the name of some disciplines became synonymous with the object of their study. The history of the term *geology* demonstrates both this and the increasing specialization that characterizes the history of European-originated disciplines. *Geography*'s first definition—"The science which treats of the earth in general"—initially arose in 1690 with a book entitled *Geologia: or, A Discourse concerning the Earth before the Deluge.* By 1795, scientists began to limit geology to the study of the earth's crust, differentiating it from fields such as mineralogy. By 1816, the term became synonymous with the geological features of a region.[1] If disciplines such as geology, biology, history, and mythology seemed so objectively true as to be indistinguishable from their subjects, then some types of representation appeared equally realistic—none perhaps more so than maps.

For many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europeans, mapping represented the epitome of Enlightenment epistemic ideals. Combining the use of measurement, instruments, and inscription, geographers sought to determine part of the world's order through direct observation. Early taxonomists of natural history used maps as a metaphor for their efforts, Carolus Linnaeus describing his taxonomy as the *mappa naturae,* "the map of nature."[2] The contemporary inheritance of this attitude is evident in phrases like "Let me map it out for you" and "This book maps our history," which suggest that mapping provides a clear, spatial elucidation. This point of view considers maps as seemingly transparent representations free from bias, making them seem to be the "kingdom of rationality"[3] according to philosopher of science Donna Haraway, and "a mirror of nature" as described by philosopher Richard Rorty.[4] In modern Anglophone cultures, therefore, mapping has served as a common metaphor for lucid knowing, comparable to a god's-eye view. Indeed, the invocation of a divine eye reminds us that the power of maps among Westerners has derived not from their presumed rationality alone, but also from their visual quality. As we also shall see in our deliberations regarding "on the spot"

pictorial productions in chapter 4, viewers often accorded visual representations an "ocular authority," as described by historian David Arnold. In consonance with many contemporary European knowledge projects, growing scientistic confidence in these two aspects of what single artists often accomplished—mapmaking and landscape painting—motivated the gradual, specialized distinction between vertical and horizontal imaging of the earth's surface. In the late eighteenth century, the two became fairly distinct,[5] and by 1839 a new disciplinary category, *cartography*, came into use.[6]

Cartography's authority derived from its apparently perfect expression of the ideals of Western-originated science. In chapter 1, we described among the four elements of scientism the ideal of a unified science. Scientism portrays each scientific discipline as a branch stemming from the singular tree of "science." Although each diverges methodologically from the other in its investigations of nature and/or humanity, all share some common qualities that define them as part of "true" science. Among these are the following four elements:

(1) Total quantifiability and objectivity: all significant attributes of natural and human phenomena can be reduced to a numerical expression, which best approximates objectivity.
(2) Scientific classification: the differentiation of objects into entirely discrete, rigidly bounded, and mutually exclusive categories.
(3) Interconnectivity: a quality that allows the results of one discipline to be incorporated into and/or expressed in any other.
(4) Totalizing view: all phenomena can be understood through science, if not now, then eventually.

Again, these contribute to the ideal of unified science as promoted in scientism but seldom fully realized. Because maps were (and are) understood in many societies to depict space totalistically with a singular, objective vision that can be zoomed in or out to definitively envision discrete objects in their particular, quantifiable locations, they have been the ideal screen upon which to project knowledge from multiple disciplines. We will explicate these qualities as manifested in the examples that follow. An historical review of efforts to map Chainpur demonstrates both how British cartography differed from its Mughal antecedents and how each of these elements lent scientistic authority to images of the village. Because cartography is an expensive enterprise, it has tended to rely on the state as patron. Because cartography portrays territory both within and outside the state's control, maps tend to reflect state interests and presuppositions.[7] The maps generated by the British Indian state serve better to illustrate the implied ideals of scientism than they do the British fascination with religion, and so this chapter will focus most on explicating the four presumed elements of science. Nevertheless, with three examples of Chainpur's cartographic representation—James Rennell's maps of the late eighteenth century, the revenue survey of 1845, and the *Imperial Gazetteer Atlas of India* of 1931—we see how

even this seemingly most objective and secular epistemic activity nevertheless helped communicate British views of India's essentially religious (and religiously bifurcated) nature. Moreover, they demonstrate how, from the start of British dominion over India, "religion" was projected as always already present in the subcontinent. By mapping "the religious" in Chainpur (and India in general) and by representationally projecting the category of religion onto the village's landscape, Britons created a situation in which Chainpur residents had to appropriate this presumably universal category and fit part of their lives into it as best as they could.[8]

## FOR REIGN AND REVENUE: MUGHAL AND BRITISH MAPPING EFFORTS

Chainpur's residents became British subjects in 1764. The victory of the East India Company (EIC) that year at Buxar over the Mughal's regional governor, Shuja ud-Daula followed its 1757 victory over the Bengali *nawab* at Plassey and left the Company in control, if at least tenuously, of northeast India between Awadh and the Bay of Bengal. By default, in the eyes of the Mughal emperor, this made the EIC the recognized revenue collector for that region. The Company now needed as much information as possible on manufacturing, trade, and agricultural production. To protect their windfall, they also required militarily useful knowledge of terrain since the Company faced the threat of incursions from the Mahrattas from the southwest and Mughal affiliates from the northwest. These needs culminated, first and foremost, in an expanded effort to map the territory. And, so, only three years after Buxar, the Company appointed Major James Rennell (d. 1830) as the first surveyor general of Fort William (Calcutta). The work was clearly hazardous—four potential candidates had died within a span of eight months before Rennell's selection[9] and the Council at Fort William explained that Rennell worked "to the utmost risk of his life."[10] That some of the hazard arose from indigenous resistance to surveying (and surveillance) is evidenced in an EIC letter noting Rennell's "dangerous wounds which he received from *sinassies* [sannyasis] and others in the course of his surveys."[11] Although naval surveyors had long drafted maps of the coastline along which the Company's ships had to navigate, and surveyors had already been dispatched after Plassey, Rennell's was the first systematic and comprehensive British survey of Bengal and Bihar.[12] Although all fifteen of the Company's surveyors upon whom he relied were European,[13] they, like Rennell, collected information from a variety of sources, including oral accounts from locals who helped locate villages and minor routes.[14]

Chainpur's first known representation during the British period occurred sometime after 1771, when three European surveyors (with such unheralded native help as assistants, laborers, and messengers) completed a survey map of Bihar's southwest region. Rennell would include this map in his later *Atlas*. "Chaynpoor" appears as a red dot set into the left corner of a pregnant "L" topped with a streamer[15] and straddling a road running west from Sasaram through Bhagawanpur along the Kaimur Range's northern

edge. It appears bracketed on left and right by sets of rivers angling northward to meet one another in confluences from which they run into the Ganges's arterial blue, the vast meandering of which frames the map's northern border. Slanting northeast, the Son River to the east and the more diminutive Karamnasa River to the west frame Rotas *sarkar* (division). Suggesting its prominence, Chainpur lends its name to the sub-division in which it stands.[16] Finally, in contrast with the haphazard snaking of the rivers, two longitude lines vertically frame Chainpur while a latitude line provides a long underscore.

This first map, then, situates the village geographically, socially, administratively, and mathematically. The map demonstrates how topography has helped secure Chainpur's relative economic security, showing it to surpass in size most other neighboring settlements on the southern fringe of the chapatti-flat Gangetic Valley, bordered by an extension of the Deccan Plateau. The multiple watercourses draining these, the thickly forested heights of the Kaimur Range ensure a reliable irrigation, upon which Chainpur has depended for its usually reliable agriculture. Chainpur's location on a fairly significant road meant that its residents could transit more readily the eighty kilometers to Benares—the closest city—than most of their neighbors, and reach other roads leading to the district and division headquarters of Arrah and Patna. This helped alleviate somewhat the village's isolation from the riverine traffic that ensured the success of so many other Bihar centers. Besides these geographic acts of location, the map establishes Chainpur's administrative position in a system of *subah* or provincial divisions appropriated from the Mughals. Upon obtaining the right to revenue farm these provinces, the East India Company sought not only to map the territories, but to also understand their social, political, and economic orders. Official letters to the Shahabad collector at this time demonstrate an overriding concern with maintaining the existing order in terms of administration, finances, markets (e.g., salt), land management, property disputes, recruiting soldiers, and providing protection.[17] Finally, the map posits Chainpur as a mathematically imagined location, the significance of which will be discussed below in relation to the graticule.

The maps of James Rennell—declared "the father of Indian geography" by many Indians and Britons alike—would be seminal in the imagination of both a British India and, subsequently, an Indian nation. That he included Chainpur not only on the provincial map in his atlas but also on his map depicting the whole of the territories won at Buxar, *An Actual Survey of the Provinces of Bengal, Bahar &C* (1776), promoted more European and Indian attention to the village. The cartographic materials he helped make available probably prompted the visit sixteen years later by the landscape artists Thomas and William Daniell, as we shall see in chapter 4. If so, then his representation of the village likely made possible their lithographs of Chainpur's scenery which, among others in their published portfolios, would become the first widely distributed pictures of India in Europe. However, strategic, not aesthetic, interests informed the surveyor's interest in Chainpur, since the Karamnasa River that ran south to north through the district served as a defensible perimeter against Maratha and other incursions. Hence, Chainpur's initial

presence on a topographical map from the 1770s may be owed to its proximity to a road that led west to the frontier. Armies and officials on the march required supplies and support, and Chainpur was known for its bazaar and offices.

Although the Company's newfound strategic concern for topography made its information interests more closely than before align with those of the Mughals—whose cartographic specialists and practices it initially relied upon—British cartography gradually diverged from these and other indigenous techniques. The differences and similarities between Mughal and British maps illustrate the current scholarly debate regarding the continuity and discontinuity in information systems between these states. However, a middle way between these schools of thought is possible, one which recognizes the importance of the continuities while demonstrating that the gradual change toward European-originated practices marks the ascent of introduced forms of knowledge authorized by their correspondence to scientism.

Too few pre-British maps have survived to determine whether or not Chainpur found its place on any. However, those that remain suggest that even if it did, it would be a somewhat different type of placing, and the difference would demonstrate some of the dynamics separating Enlightenment knowing from premodern South Asian forms of knowledge.[18] The changes that the British brought to the preexisting system they appropriated reflected both the discontinuities their scientism would affect in many indigenous epistemes and the divergent polities of the Mughal and British states. Despite these discontinuities, Rennell drew on Mughal-era information in his effort to create an entirely new construction. For instance, in his *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan*, he explains that, in addition to his own measurements and observations, he relied on the *Ain-i Akbari*, penned by Emperor Akbar's chief minister Abul Fazl Allami (d. 1602), which Rennell considered "a register of the highest authority."[19]

The *Ain-i Akbari* describes Hindustan district by district, listing the subdistricts (*pargana*s) and quantifying the land area and revenue of each. The fact that one of the seven *pargana*s in Rohtas district was named after Chainpur, combined with the survival of multiple, period monuments surrounding the village, evidences its erstwhile prominence in pre-British Bihar. A Persian inscription from the rule of Sher Shah Suri (r. 1539–1545), the period from which the relics date, describes "Chaund"—as Chainpur then was called[20]—as "a renowned place" while inferring that as a *shahr* (a town; a city) it served as headquarters for its *pargana*.[21] Suri temporarily displaced the Mughals to rule the north of the subcontinent, and the massive mausoleum just outside Chainpur (discussed in chapter 7) almost perfectly duplicates the one erected by Sher Shah to his father in Sasaram, an important Suri administrative center fifty kilometers distant. Local social memories describe the Chainpur edifice as the tomb of Bakhtiyar Khilji or Bakhtiyar Khan, reputedly a son-in-law of Sher Shah. Given the size of the mausoleum and the presence of other Suri-era tombs nearby that are smaller yet finely built, as well as an unfinished *barahdari* (a "twelve-doored" hall) atop a neighboring hill, one historian has concluded that Sher Shah granted this region to his son-in-law who, in

the midst of his building program, fell victim to the resurgent Mughals, soon to be led by Akbar.

British references to the *Ain-i Akbari* in their effort to know Chainpur and other parts of Hindustan demonstrate how they integrated Mughal-era records and information-gathering systems into their rule, even as their own systems of record making and data collection increasingly diverged from these. For example, in order for Abul Fazl to list Chainpur subdistrict's land area at 15,000 acres and its revenue as 4 million *dam*s,[22] he had to aggregate data from an intricate information system that began with locally based officials—village accountants (*patwari*s) and chief registrars (*qanungo*s)—who periodically measured the fields and maintained records.[23] Gradually this data passed its way up the system to higher levels of officials who continually aggregated it into information suitable for their level of responsibility, be it the subdistrict (*mahal*), district (*sarkar*), or province (*subah*). C. A. Bayly has detailed how Britons appropriated for their own rule this empirical information system, which fit into a much larger structure of surveillance and communication in Indo-Muslim-ruled India.[24] Reflecting their caution in disrupting this system, even as the East India Company tailored property and revenue practices to conform to English models, they largely maintained existing information-gathering systems. For instance, the British kept the Mughal office of *patwari* in place far longer than they did Mughal systems of land ownership and revenue assessment. Demonstrative of the perils Britons encountered when they did change indigenous information regimes, the EIC had to reverse its 1793 decision dismantling Bihar's supposedly fraudulent *qanungo* system, so severe had been the resulting decline in revenue collection.[25] In contrast, their administrative decision to divide Rohtas district stuck and, for the rest of its time under foreign rule, Chainpur would be part of a new district: Shahabad.

Because early British systems of empirical information gathering about terrain and routes bore resemblances to existing indigenous systems such as those upon which Abul Fazl depended, the maps produced by contemporary Britons and South Asians shared certain commonalities. Maps of the world produced by both groups tended to result from state sponsorship, relied on a system of longitude and latitude, and demonstrated the influence of Ptolemaic and Arab cartography and astronomy. Both the Mughals and the British also maintained significant archives of route maps and strip maps.[26] Equivalent to today's automotive club Trip-Tiks, such maps depicted the path from one destination to another, representing the prominent scenery and locations only immediately adjacent to the route. Although similar, Mughal route maps did not appear to use coordinates as those made by Britons did, an important difference in the context of quantification, discussed below.[27] In his endeavor to synthesize existing maps into a single, systematic survey, Rennell relied on maps and other records made on the march by military and administrative officials in his endeavor to create the first systematic British map of greater Bengal.[28] For instance, he incorporated an itinerary compiled by an Indian officer, Golem Mohamed, who had been dispatched to explore the region between Bengal and the Deccan.[29] Commonalities in techniques meant that Rennell could

use Indian sources in the absence of British ones, which he preferred. Ultimately, he incorporated as many Indian materials as British, though not without double-checking the former, the names of whose authors he seldom recorded.[30] Despite such parallels, significant differences existed that reflected less on the geographic abilities of each culture than on the remarkable emphasis on quantification by Britons, and the stature of mapping in their increasingly scientistic culture. These qualities would become most apparent with both the British dependence on the graticule and their insistence on standardization.

An important component in British attitudes toward this supposedly objective representation and a significant departure from preexisting systems was British use of the graticule—a grid of latitudinal and longitudinal lines imposed on a map.[†] The graticule reentered European usage in the 1400s with the reappropriation of Ptolemy's *Geographia* (c. 141 CE) from Arab sources. Three centuries later, Rennell actively sought to reconcile his observations with the ancient, authoritative claims of Ptolemy and Pliny, and relied partly upon the graticule to do so.[31] In contrast with Rennell's maps, South Asian cartography only tended to note the longitude and latitude for a limited number of places depicted. These allowed travellers and armies to determine their position relative to particular sites while on the move. However, due to the difficulties in determining longitude, only some places were so located. Rennell's topographical maps, on the other hand, all grafted a graticule upon the depicted terrain, allocating to each site a specific location in this grid and allowing the user to extrapolate the longitude and latitude of every place located on the map. So, for example, the graticule lines on both the circa 1771 map and Rennell's 1776 map allow us to easily estimate Chainpur's position as close to 25° north latitude, 83° east longitude.[32] However, the graticule remained an ideal that was difficult to realize. Although Rennell made observations every few days while surveying to determine latitude, the limits of contemporary technology still made longitude observations difficult, and so these were few and of doubtful accuracy.[33]

The graticule's seemingly strict linearity suggested an objectivity through a purely geometrical determination of position and size. In contrast, South Asian maps often used variously sized symbols for towns in order to reflect their relative significance, not their empirically observable size. They also located towns based on their general relation to one another, not according to their location as established by reference to a quantified, positivistic geographic system.[34] On most British maps, the omnipresent lines of latitude and longitude wordlessly informed the viewer that every map could be related to others according to an apparently objective system divorced from any social context. British confidence in the empirically quantified rendering of places as objects in the "mathematical

[†] On certain maps, such as Mercator's Projection, longitude and latitude appear as a grid comprised entirely of latitude lines of equal length. However, a quick glance at a globe reminds us that latitude lines differ in length and, so, they cannot comprise a grid on a spherical surface.

web"[35] of the graticule perhaps reached its apogee in a recommendation by Colin Mackenzie, who served as surveyor general at Calcutta after Rennell. Faced with the challenges of nonuniform spellings and multiple names for one village, and multiple villages with the same name, Mackenzie suggested that names should be replaced with a purely numeric representation: a longitude and latitude designation that would be standardized, singular, and noncontextual.[36] In contrast to most British maps, only a very few of the surviving maps produced in pre-British South Asia made use of the graticule, even among world maps.[37] Although the dependence of these on relational placement as the main way of locating places may have made them just as practical for their users as British maps, the preference for mathematical placement among the latter demonstrates how thoroughly the first ideal element of modern European science—total quantification and the illusion of objectivity—suffused British cartography.

Here we must pause and make an important note. What concerns us is not a judgment of the comparative worth of British and South Asian maps but, rather, the rhetoric of scientistic accomplishment. It might appear that an emphasis on the presence of cartographic features that we now take as standard—such as the use of graticule or scale—in most British maps but few pre-British South Asian ones suggests that the latter lacked something or were "less developed." Such a conclusion reflects an assumption that the most accurate mapmaking requires such features. It does not. Take, for instance, the revolutionary map for London's underground train system. It uses neither graticule nor scale, nor does it precisely portray the location of each station in geometrical space, yet a more pragmatic representation of the tube system has yet to be devised since the prototype map appeared in 1933.[38]

To restate the point, the degree to which a study such as this appears to be judgmental as it notes a divergence in mapping systems is a measure of our expectations that Western maps are the most accurate, and a reflection of the success of European cartography in displacing alternative paradigms. Such a presumption results from the pervasive progressivism that has long accompanied Western discourse on South Asian systems of knowledge. This demonstrates the impact of the second element of scientism—the teleology of improvement—as outlined in the previous chapter. Yet despite an enduring effort to place all knowledge systems on a singular track of increasing accuracy and objectivity that culminates in Western science, the history of scientism amply demonstrates the vulnerability of sciences to social, economic, and political vicissitudes. Indeed, as Kapil Raj reminds us, the importance of the imperial context for the development of many European sciences has too often been overlooked.[39] Certainly, arguments that government projects increased the knowledge Indians had about their country helped obscure indigenous contributions even as they helped legitimate the British state. Indeed, the advances that surveys in India contributed to the practices of cartography in general—often surpassing similar projects in Europe in scope and detail—were made possible by the revenue, labor, and intellectual contributions of Indians. Combined, these made possible the trigonometrical surveying of India, which far overshadowed comparable

efforts in Britain and Europe.[‡] Collecting the revenue from landholders necessary to support this and other imperial projects required its own cartographic effort extending from, but usually connected to, the larger British effort to map India.

Despite the ideals associated with it, the modern history of the European graticule demonstrates how mired in subjectivity it was from the start. The British, French, and Dutch vied with one another to determine the location of the prime meridian: 0° longitude. As a point of national pride, they respectively promoted Greenwich, Paris, and Amsterdam as the orientation point for this ultimately arbitrary line. Although the final victory of Greenwich must surely have disappointed the French and Dutch, the establishment of the prime meridian in Europe—which made Europe the orientation point for this positioning system—served as a harbinger of the globalized Western scientific order that began to unfold in the eighteenth century, in great part due to the efforts of men like Rennell. It also demonstrated the coalescence of a globally standard measurement system to which the French and Dutch preferred to belong than defy, no matter the cost to their national pride.

That the maps created by his British and Indian successors did not differ from Rennell's in orientation, framing, and graticule demonstrates a key component of the European epistemological order: standardization. The great diversity in South Asian mapping methods in the centuries preceding British supremacy reflects a flexibility of technique[§] meant to pragmatically fit each project.[40] In its commitment to quantification, European empiricism required standardization to realize the conceits of objectivity and universal comprehensibility. For instance, while the effort to establish a system of longitude led to a European consensus on the prime meridian, the effort to standardize the measurement of the earth brought about the metric system. Both Jean Picard and Christopher Wren proposed a system using a pendulum to determine one second of length for geodesy (the measurement of the Earth), but national pride again prompted an impasse since the length of the pendulum's swing varied between England and France. Neither side would acquiesce. Later, C.-A. Prieur du Vernois derived the metric system from a measurement arc taken between Dunkirk and Barcelona. Despite British resistance, most of Europe would accept it. The scientistic drive to *quantifiable* knowledge makes essential the standardization of measurement, whether through the graticule or English mile.[41] In contrast, the areas formerly under Mughal rule had a vast disparity of systems for measuring land. Even the familiar signifier of length, the *kos,* varied in length from region to region,[42] and British-era district administrators long sought to grasp the various local standards, which might differ even between two adjoining villages.

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‡ Of note is that the largest, British initiated predecessor of India's Trigonometrical Survey was not the Ordnance Survey of England but, rather, the survey of Ireland, performed in light of mounting opposition to colonial activities there.

§ One exception to this pattern may be found in Maratha revenue maps that occasionally accompanied official survey reports and demonstrated continuities spanning decades. Schwartzberg 1992b, 444.

These issues of standardization, quantification, and measurement coalesced in the use of scale in British cartography. While South Asian maps frequently depicted distance and the size of certain topographic features, they seldom if ever attempted to portray territory using a single scale of representation.[43] That is to say, maps did not tend to uniformly depict the distances between places. While both indigenous and British maps often offered a scale of importance in representing towns and cities—the more important or more inhabited, the larger their depiction—each British map usually portrayed the overall geographic space with strict and constant adherence to a single scale (e.g., 1 inch equals 16 miles). Beyond its own usefulness, scale was necessary for the application of a graticule, which could only be laid on a landscape uniformly represented. Not only were the relative geographic relationships between specific features on one map made more compatible, but different maps—even of different scales—became more mutually intelligible if users understood the relation between their respective scales (e.g., a map of 1 inch for 4 miles is two times as large as a map of the same area which is on a scale of 1 inch for 8 miles). Such compatibility allowed for the promise of a totalized cartography of the world with small-scale maps of the continents and oceans providing the big picture, while maps of increasing scale provided increasingly detailed yet perfectly aligned portraits of the earth's surface. Hence, any geographical object could be "observed" from multiple, interlocking perspectives, scale indicating the size of the object and the graticule precisely locating it.** This urge to standardization[44] compelled Britons to include on their cartographic representations equivalencies for many indigenous measurement systems. Indeed, Rennell's 1776 map includes three correlated scales, including one for British miles and another for Bengali "coss" (*kos*), while his travel guide to roads in Bihar and Bengal tries to correlate the *kos* of Bihar and Bengal not only with the mile but also with the Hindustani *kos*.[45]

This diversity in indigenous measurement reflected a larger plurality within South Asian information orders. C. A. Bayly describes the overall Mughal information order as characterized by divergent systems and sources that overlapped one another without any aspiration toward a centralized network. Much of this depended on affective knowledge, information obtained through "participation in communities of belief and marriage, through religious affiliation and association with holy men, seers, astrologers and physicians." Top-down imposition of standardized measures would impede efforts to draw knowledge from local officials and specialists and the Mughals allowed local practices to proliferate. Mughal geographical systems tended to be oriented around specialized groups who collected data and directed it to specific individuals, instead of to

** The success of the London Underground map—despite its divergence from these British cartographic standards—is the exception that proves the rule. It signals in no manner that its geographic frame fits within a graticule or accords with any other map, offering only a relational portrait of the self-contained system of London light-rail transportation.

government offices.[46] When surveyor Francis Buchanan visited Chainpur *pargana* in 1813, he reported that

> There was in the collector's office no standard for the land measure; but the Tahsildars of Shahasram and Chayanpur had poles, which they called three Sekunderi-guz long, and these everywhere in this district are the twentieth part of the bigha [a unit of area] allowed in public accompts. At Shahasram the pole of the Tahsildar measured 8 feet 2 9/10 inches, while the Sekunder-guz of the Kazi, also an official standard, was 2 feet 9 ½ inches, so that the pole should be 8 feet 4½ inches . . . I was, however, assured that little or no attention was paid to these standards and that the owners of the land used their own arm as a standard, reckoning the pole 5½ cubits, which if they measure fair, will be nearly 8 feet 3 inches.[47] [*sic*]

Later British systems, in contrast with the relational interactions encouraged among Mughal officers, sought to establish uniform and formal exchanges between officials, rotating through various postings in accordance with British policy to avoid enduring local connections. Information, reduced to writing, could then be disseminated—not through interpersonal contact, but through official publications that communicated not only information but also the authority of the state. Undoubtedly, the need for officials and servants familiar with these standardized-measurement and data-collection routines partly fueled the government's interest in promoting European forms of education. These efforts cumulatively granted the government a mantle of public educator, providing types of information and education supposedly unavailable outside the state's efforts.

## EARLY REPRESENTATIONS AND RESISTANCES

Overall, therefore, Mughal geographical systems tended to be *interpersonal* and directed along narrow lines of communication while British systems were *impersonal* and diffused information broadly. Contemporary maps reflected the qualities of these two systems, with Mughal examples oriented to forefront relations among places, and British examples emphasizing discrete locations for each place depicted. Philosopher Michel de Certeau describes those embracing such a panoptic vision: "An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transforms him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god." By becoming "a viewpoint and nothing more," the reader of British maps sheds her subjectivity because maps promise access to all (aerial) viewpoints. Taken together, the variously scaled depictions of the same place seemingly offer a panoptic vision of it.[48] Yet, we should not overestimate British achievements

of this ideal given that many maps seemed to eschew it, many Indians resisted in ways that undermined it, and religious representations defied it.

Despite the prevalence of ideals of objectivity, many British maps sidestepped the use of graticule, scale, and established standards. For instance, a map included in an 1813 Shahabad collector's letter utilized none of these devices as it sought to represent the distances between the district's *thana*s.[49] Later, in 1828, the judge of Shahabad included a similarly crafted district map in a letter to Patna's court of appeal. Roads and rivers run straight with barely a variation and mere rectangles represent the different *thana*s (police districts) on a map oriented to the south.[50] The *thana*s' depiction is reminiscent of the rectangular village forms of pre-British Indian maps with their non-geometrical rendering of location. To call such maps "inaccurate" would be as fallacious as to do the same with indigenous examples. Such judgments assume that every mapmaker endeavors to create a mimetic representation of reality according to a specific set of cartographic values and methods.[51] However, the unknown mapmaker's declared intention of the 1813 example was to provide a "Statement of the distance of the different Tannahs and each other in Zillah Shahabad," while the 1828 map—also of unknown authorship—apparently sought to schematically depict the arrangement of various *thana*s and the roads connecting them. In other words, these maps reflected motivations to represent relations among places rather than the places themselves, much as most pre-British maps appeared to have intended. Despite exceptions such as these, British cartography persistently sought the realization of the ideal of panoptic vision, influencing Britons and Indians alike to disparage examples that did not conform to that ideal.

Britons quickly discovered the problems inherent both in creating an objective image of terrain and in attempting standardization. On the one hand, parts of the landscape militated against definitive representations. Shahabad collectors repeatedly complained about the problems arising from shifting rivers and wandering lands. Thomas Twining, an early Shahabad collector, saved landowner Birjoo Sing from possible life-long imprisonment by determining that he could not pay the arrear rent for which the government held him responsible because encroachments by the Ganges had consumed the land meant to provide the revenue.[52] One protracted court case in 1817 attempted to decide who owned land washed to Shahabad from neighboring Sarun district by the Ganges as it gyrated in between the two districts. Even if the land was stable, the system of measurement was not in these early years. Officials in the 1817 case were bedeviled further because the same term of measurement denoted differing lengths in the adjoining districts.[53]

As was the case with other information projects, land surveying often met resistance from local inhabitants and officials. In 1797, the *tahsildar* (revenue collector) of Chainpur discovered two *patwari*s (village accountants) falsifying their records. This not being the first such offence of misinformation, the district collector suggested that the government put all *patwari* appointments under its control, since they tended to serve the proprietors' interests,[54] including European ones.[55] Non-cooperation could take more violent

forms as well, as reflected in a surveyor's 1920 comment "that Survey and Settlement operations throughout a district create a considerable amount of unrest is a common place. In Shahabad it was anticipated that the unrest would at least reach the normal, and I remember being warned, before the operations began, of the terrors of the Bhojpuri raiyat (cultivator) and his *lathi* from which it appeared unlikely that the Settlement Officer and his subordinates would escape unscathed." Happily, he discovered that most inhabitants abided by the surveys, although one of every ten boundary marks disappeared from one year to the next.[56]

Of course, revenue concerns required measuring land for more than just its dimensions, but also for its produce. An elusive, complete land settlement[††] enticed government planners like Tantalus's fruit: perpetually just out of reach, despite the so-called Permanent Settlement of 1793. The only thing permanent about it was how the vagaries of weather, labor, deception, and particularly default perpetually frustrated actualizing the ideal. For instance, after touring the Chainpur *pargana* in 1817, Shahabad's collector suggested that the government postpone the permanent assessment of non-fixed estates there since the past years' poor harvests and inadequate cultivation would occasion an undervalued judgment.[57] Meanwhile, many zamindars (landowners) failed to meet their financial obligations, and the government ejected them from their land, which they then broke up, thus requiring a settlement with new parties. At the turn of the nineteenth century, this was particularly true in the Chainpur *pargana*.[58] (Subsequent changes in aid of zamindars allowed them to keep their lands by squeezing the *raiyat*s harder.)[59] In yet other cases, zamindars boldly resisted. As the *nazir* (court officer) of the collectorate served papers on Chainpur's zamindar, the landholder murdered him.[60] The ensuing disturbances led Shahabad's collector to propose in 1791 that some of the small fortresses (*kot*s) dotting the district's landscape should be demolished.[61] A dozen years later, while engaged in the Company's first comprehensive survey of all the Bengal territories, Francis Buchanan suspected Chainpur's zamindar of feigning sickness and the *diwan* (secretary) of pretending stupidity and underreporting the village's population.[62] Zamindars faced displacement for failing to meet the Company's assessments, and for other reasons. In Chainpur's *pargana*, the EIC dispossessed Arimardan Singh when he was implicated in another zamindar's murder. In another instance, the collector hinted that one group might forfeit land privileges they had enjoyed for centuries since they had not sufficiently developed their fields. As a result of these changes, "within ten years from 1793, there was a complete revolution in the ownership of the estates," according to a British survey official.[63] These examples also demonstrated how the Company—and later the imperial government—pursued impersonal information systems that required standardized measurements to ensure that their findings could be understood by more than just local officials.

[††] A settlement involved the British state fixing the boundaries and revenue assessment of land holdings instead of relying on frequent (e.g., one every decade) settlements.

However, this system took time to coalesce since the government was not initially interested in sharing its acquired knowledge. In Rennell's day, geographic information tended to be closely guarded before its public dissemination. For instance, in 1777 the Court of Directors dispatched to the governor general "a Box of Books, containing a very valuable Work, entitled, Neptune Orientale, by Mr. D'Apres de Mannevillette, for the improvement of navigation in the East Indies; some printed Copies of the Gentoo Code of Laws; Captn. [*sic*] Hadley's Grammars of the Persian Language; with some Maps of Captain Rennell's Survey of the Provinces of Bengal."[64] The fact that the directors in London returned these publications to their top official in India—from whence most of them originated—reflected their efforts to centralize and control the flow of information at the start. Indeed, eleven years earlier, when the directors approved Rennell's appointment as surveyor general, they required that none of his charts should be distributed locally until first seen in London.[65] Upon his retirement, the Company effectively cut Rennell off from new survey data.[66] Although Rennell continued to publish maps on India and promote new publications at home in England,[67] the court determined the latest information too valuable to share even with him.

Despite these limitations, Rennell's publication of his maps provided Britons with one of the first widely available cartographies of India. Perhaps more important, his framing of India would serve to define that space as a singular, bounded place in British and Indian imaginaries. Whereas earlier European maps had tended to place India in a larger Asian continental context or focused specifically on the dominions of the Mughals, Rennell's landmark 1782 *Hindoostan* map (see Illustration 2.1) used a map frame that defined an India reaching from the Indus to Burma and stretching from Kashmir to Cape Cormorin, with Ceylon peeking above the southern border. This would become the viewfinder for British ambitions in the subcontinent.[68] By situating each town and city as a discreet place in a uniformly measurable space—as delineated by a graticule grid and consistent scale—Rennell's maps manifested the quantification element of scientism. Indeed, he heralded the Company's effort to make a "mathematical survey... of a tract equal in extent to France and England."[69] This urge to quantification would have important consequences for the understanding of religion in the next century.

Less immediately apparent were Rennell's attitudes toward religion as demonstrated in a non-quantified element of his mapping. An elaborate and, relative to contemporary maps, outsized cartouche fairly dominates the bottom of his seminal 1782 *Hindoostan* map (see Illustration 2.2). He describes what it portrays in his *Memoir*: "*Brittannia* [*sic*] receiving into her Protection, the sacred Books of the *Hindoos,* presented by the *Pundits,* or *Learned Brahmins:* in Allusion to the humane Interposition of the British Legislature in Favor of the Natives of Bengal, in the Year 1781."[70] Considering the rapaciousness of many EIC officials at this time, surely Rennell's trust in British humaneness was at least mildly undeserved. This notwithstanding, the cartouche interposes a symbol of British rule ("Brittannia") borrowed from Greek antiquity between two Europeans and three Brahmans—intended to represent Indians—and the books labeled "shaster"—meant to

ILLUSTRATION 2.1. © The British Library Board. James Rennell, *Hindoostan*. 1782.

depict their "sacred Books." Whereas neither Britannia, nor the symbolic English lion behind her, nor the two Europeans manifest any expression of religion, the three Hindus do as Brahmans and as bearers of the *shastra*s—the caste and texts that Britons most immediately identified as Hindu. The cartouche also includes in the distant background two other sets of nearly indistinct figures whose labor the Company relied upon: a plowman and a loading gang serving the European ships behind them.

Rennell's omission of any evident Muslims in his cartouche—despite his awareness of their significant presence in the subcontinent—may be explained by the representation of them in his characterization of India's history elsewhere in the *Memoir*:

> India has in all ages excited the attention of the curious, in almost every walk of life. Its rare products and manufactures, engaged that of the merchants; while the mild and inoffensive religion of Brama, and the manners inculcated by it, attracted the notice of philosophers. The structure of its language too, is remarkable; and has a

ILLUSTRATION 2.2. © The British Library Board. Detail of cartouche, James Rennell, *Hindoostan*. 1782.

claim to originality. It had been happy for the Indians, if they had not attracted the notice of a class of men more inimical to the happiness of mankind: for the softness and effeminacy induced by the climate, and the yielding nature of the soil, which produces most spontaneously, invited the attacks of their more hardy neighbours; and rendered them an easy prey to every foreign invader. Hence we find them successfully conquered by the Persians, Patans, and Moguls: and it is probable, that, like the Chinese, they have seldom had a dynasty of kings, from among their own countrymen.[71]

Hence, Rennell classifies the South Asian population as Indian and non-Indian, one identified by the "religion of Brama" (a common synonym for Hindu religion in this period) and the others "Mahomedan," according to a later passage.[72] The absence of religious markers among the Europeans suggests that they stand apart from the Hindu Indians and Muslim invaders, free of religious prejudice, just as their noninclusion in his list of foreign conquerors seems to suggest that their invasion does not impugn Britons as "inimical to the happiness of mankind," in the manner that Persian, Pathan, and Mughal incursions have impugned Muslims.

Despite Company restrictions on the circulation of information, cartographical materials—like other publications—became increasingly available to the public. The publisher of Rennell's 1776 map of Bengal and Bihar (his first to include Chainpur) added a paragraph congratulating the Company for its decision to have it "published to the World." The administrative importance of maps was demonstrated when, in 1778, the EIC distributed six hundred English printings of road maps of Bengal and Bihar to provincial offices and military officials.[73] While Rennell's *Atlas* (1779) proved so popular with Company officials that its first printing of four hundred volumes soon sold out[74] (among other uses, it was used frequently in land disputes),[75] his *Memoir* found public favor with three editions published within eleven years. Through the public distribution of his map via a publication system unknown in South Asia before the eighteenth century, Rennell promoted both a geographic and anthropological portrait of India while simultaneously portraying Britain. By the next century, British attention to Indian religious themes would move from the periphery of maps to their center.

## REVENUE SURVEYS

The first third of the nineteenth century witnessed the solidification of British rule in Bengal and Bihar as the possibility of invasion by South Asian and European interlopers gradually faded. Administrators in British India focused increasingly on the requirements of sustaining their growing empire, and no requirement loomed larger than revenue collection.

Although records do not indicate that communal identification played much role in the assessment and collection of land revenue, the maps of individual villages completed as part of various revenue surveys clearly demonstrate both the centrality of religion and the gathering emphasis on strictly delineated boundaries even in examples of the most routine British mapping projects. These surveys also reflect the widening dissemination and public impact of the products of local mapping projects.

British rule required revenue derived from agricultural production. The Permanent Settlement of 1793 established proprietary rights for zamindars and an expected level of production from each *raiyat*, depending on the size and quality of the zamindar's land.

The problem of collecting this revenue already noted continued to persistent in Chainpur. During the tenure of the Shahabad's first collector, Chainpur's *amil* (local revenue officer) Mustafa Cooly Khan complained that he required soldiers to ensure *raiyat*s paid. The collector, W. A. Brooke, initially supplied twenty *sepai*s (soldiers) for the task, but then sacked Khan and convinced the government to combine the duties of revenue collection and criminal administration in his office in order to "infuse vigour into the collections." Then, as one farmer after another defaulted on their obligations, locals brought charges against Brooke. He noted the unfortunate contrast with "Bengal, where a peon, acting by order, can bring a whole pargana of raiyats before the Collector without the least trouble. In this part of the country, and particularly in Shahabad, it is very different, for they do not scruple here to oppose even an armed force sent by order of Government."[76] The stereotypes of unruly Biharis and submissive Bengalis would last for centuries. Reports from Shahabad's collectors to the Board of Revenue testify to the usual litany of problems: falsification of accounts by *patwari*s, the variation in measuring-rod sizes between districts, fraudulent measurements, destroyed records, and outright defiance to provide information by both Indians and resident Britons.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, collectors responded to the endless boundary and assessment disputes by dispatching minor officials to do surveys and make maps. By 1844, the superintendent of survey for Shahabad noted that "quarrelsome and litigious" zamindars had brought false complaints against most of the district's native officers, most recently Deputy Collector Syad Lootf Alli. Although the superintendent had cleared Alli of bribery allegations and requested him to stay on, the chagrined deputy collector resigned anyway, thus leaving an inadequate workforce to complete the necessary registers and maps.[77] In light of this frustratingly inconstant situation, some EIC officials proposed an all-India survey to establish all land boundaries in order to determine the amount of land under each *raiyat*'s cultivation. This would, they argued, lead to a more efficient and rational administrative and financial situation for the Company[78] since maps played a perennial part of settlement proceedings and efforts to settle boundary disputes. Because zamindars more likely had the education required to read the maps that now served as authoritative adjudicators in disagreements, cartography served to place the *raiyat* at a disadvantage, as it had farmers in Europe.[79] The Company's cartographical commitments reveal the overall British urge to scientific classification and to the location of discrete, definable objects.

The epitome of this locative effort would be the Great Trigonometrical Survey (GTS). This sought to establish a grid of triangulations across the subcontinent's landscape—which the British increasingly brought under their control—based on precisely established positions that could be used to definitively locate any place of significance. In a proposal dated 1800, the government explained that with the successful completion of their plan "the surveyors of particular districts will be spared much labour when they know the positions of some leading points to which they can refer, because when these points are laid down in the exact situation in which they are upon the Globe all objects of whatever

denomination such as towns, forts rivers [*sic*] &c which have a relation to these points will also have their Situations true in Latitude and Longitude."[80] Originally directed by Colonel William Lambton, the GTS passed over to George Everest, who lent his name to the eponymous peak he helped survey. Although the GTS, which occupied a great number of British surveyors for much of the nineteenth century, would be considered the most scientific survey due to its highly accurate measurements, the revenue surveys reflected how scientism engaged religious themes in British India.[‡‡]

Revenue Surveyor Lieutenant W. S. Sherwill supervised a survey between 1844 and 1846 that created large-scale maps of boundaries for all villages in Shahabad district's thirteen *pargana*s (divisions). This was no small task considering that nearly two thousand villages stood in Chainpur's *pargana* alone, the district's largest. A *thakbast* or preliminary survey, undertaken by surveyor *amin*s and other Indian staff, would sketch a rudimentary outline for and settle boundary disputes of each village before the arrival of the European revenue surveyor, who would complete a more thorough study,[81] often described as "the scientific survey."[82] Despite the effort, a later settlement official deemed this boundary survey defective because of its failure to definitively determine the boundaries of all villages and districts.[83] As a result, an 1885 act allowed local governments to complete additional surveys at will and, so, an experimental survey took foot in a nearby district, stirring concerns and suspicions anew.[84] This dissatisfaction and new survey simultaneously demonstrate the persistently contested nature of local boundaries and the British persistence to define them nevertheless. Indeed, even after decades of disappointed expectations, Colonel Thuillier, head of all revenue surveys and later surveyor general, at mid-century still believed that such surveys could establish "the permanent record of the landed tenures" and do "away with the constant necessity for partial measurements" for engineering projects.[85] In contrast, Mughal practices probably estimated agricultural yields without establishing definitive village boundaries.[86]

Thuillier's faith derived from the scientistic precept that each entity, to be properly classified and fully understood, could and must be known as a bounded, discrete object. In part, this relied upon the previously described expectation that the ability to know an object required one to determine an object's unique location. This could be done most effectively by establishing the position of each neighboring object, and hence—in the case of villages—the impulse to definitively establish village borders. No surviving Indian map from a pre-British revenue survey makes any such attempt. Instead, they tend to demonstrate an emphasis on relative placement rather than absolute location. Indeed, as also noted earlier, pre-British indigenous mapmakers seldom provided even longitude

‡‡ Surveys were of three types: topographical, trigonometrical, and revenue. For accounts of the GTS, see Edney 1997, Barrow 2003, and Keay 2000. In British India, systems of revenue surveying, assessment, and collection were fantastically complicated and varied, so the situation in Chainpur must be understood to be even more particular than many other administrative exercises by the state. For detailed accounts, see Robb 1997 and Hollingbery 1879.

and latitude, and if they did so it was only for a few select locations. Most commonly, their maps depicted villages according to a formalized rectangular form without attempting to portray their actual shape.[87] Indeed, as one scholar has observed for Maratha field surveys, verbal depictions seem to have been preferred over visual ones,[88] though we need to again recognize that any conclusions remain contingent on the paucity of surviving maps and other records. In contrast, by the British Empire's end the standard surveys so focused on individual villages (although occasionally one map might include multiple villages) that, as the director of surveys for Bengal and Assam explained later, the production of such area maps was never more than a subsidiary object of the survey which took "the village recognized locally, as the *real* unit of survey."[89]

Sherwill's staff completed their map of Chainpur in December 1845. Throughout British India, the staff of the various revenue surveyors dutifully quantified each village's land area and annual revenue. In Shahabad district's case, a scale map situates every village relative to surrounding settlements, each named in English and Persian. Within the borders of the most carefully detailed maps, Sherwill represents symbolically the five elements of the village apparently most important to the EIC. The Chainpur map, as seen in Illustration 2.3, first indicates agricultural resources—water tanks, palm trees, and other trees—and land designations. Second are roads: Chainpur's many exits reflecting how it has served as the hub for a nexus of a dozen villages. Third, the map indicates settlements, a splotchy sprawl of "L" shapes indiscriminately representing homes and businesses while red circles denote wells. Boundary lines differentiate Chainpur and its neighboring villages, while names identify Chainpur's neighborhoods. Fourth, a red-lined square with bastion-like dots at the corners and a hint of a gate signifies the erstwhile fort that still defines the settlement' southern boundary. Fifth and finally, the map fixes religious sites. Using a discrete symbol that mimics the generic shape of each type of building, the map situates a mosque and four temples where they generally stand today.

Given our concern for the centrality of the religion category in British representations, it is notable that even in an operation to map Chainpur for the sake of revenue extraction, Company officials marked religious sites. This suggests that just as the presumed physical boundaries of the village defined it as an economic and legal entity, so its temples and mosques characterized its social quality. They certainly did not serve as surveying reference points, since their positions on this, like other revenue maps, were not always made exact and the survey points used are clearly marked.[90] Instead, assuming that Indians primarily identified with and divided along religious communities, Sherwill inscribed the categorical difference between Hindus and Muslims by portraying temples and mosques, providing a unique symbol for each community's presumably distinct and natural place of worship in his official representation of Shahabad's villages. This situation remarkably parallels a description by Louis Marin of a Paris map executed in 1652:

> The economy of these signs in their disposition on the cartographic plane no longer obeys the rules of the order of geometry and reason but, rather, the norms and

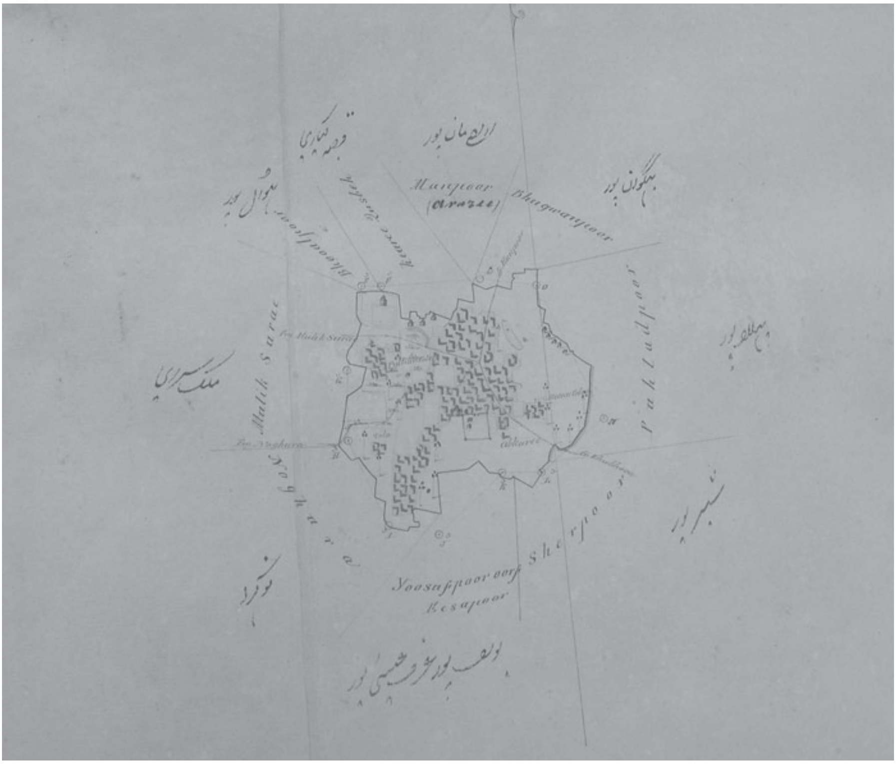

ILLUSTRATION 2.3. "Chynepoor." Revenue survey map. 1845. Reproduced courtesy of the Bhojpur District Record Room, Ara.

> values of the order of social and religious tradition. Only the churches and important mansions benefit from natural signs and from the visible rapport they maintain with what they represent. Townhouses and private homes, precisely because they are private and not public, will have the right only to the general and common representation of an arbitrary and institutional sign, the poorest, the most elementary (but maybe, by virtue of this, principal) of geometric elements; the point identically reproduced in bulk.[91]

Indeed, as with the revenue maps for all the surrounding villages, Chainpur's map visually delineates between the marks for residences that leave them individually indistinguishable and the symbols for temples and mosques that imitate their stereotypical forms. That such interests and practices long preceded the revenue surveys, even in Indian latitudes far removed from Chainpur, is suggested by a map of a village in Guntur district of the Madras Presidency dated 1783. Again, the surveyor generally outlines reservoirs and fields, traces the outline of a fort, and indicates two mosques, both symbolically and with labels.[92]

An absence is another significant aspect of Chainpur's revenue survey map: Sherwill's surveyors noted none of the Sufi *dargah*s (tombs) in the area. *Dargah*s for centuries have

provided sites of shared religiosity for Hindus, Muslims, and others throughout South Asia. Hence, when Francis Buchanan executed the first systematic British survey of the region in 1813, he made particular note of the tomb of Sufi "Osman Shah" that still stands near Chainpur.[93] Yet the relevant revenue map from the 1844–1846 survey omits it and every other Sufi tomb in the area, at least one other of which certainly existed at the time. Beyond these omissions, the surveyors also made odd religious conflations. For instance, the map for Malik Sarai, a village neighboring Chainpur, depicts two monumental mausoleums as mosques, although few locals would have confused them as such.[§§] Sherwill's choice to reduce all the public religious buildings in the village to two mutually exclusive categories instead of either a general category (e.g., "place of worship") or greater differentiation that would note sites of inclusive devotion (e.g., *dargah*s) reflects a British intention to reinscribe the same Hindu-Muslim binary evident in Rennell's work seven decades earlier. At least as late as 1912, revenue surveyors in Bihar continued to differentiate temples from mosques without any indication of tombs—whether *dargah*s or not—or any other religious structures, besides churches.[94]

Simultaneous with his geographic demarcation of borders in order to definitively distinguish one village from another, Sherwill's religious classifications inferred an essential social division. The ideal of Western-originated science requires the clear definition not only of every object, but also the categories to which each is assigned. Items belong to a category when they share some essential quality common to other members of that category. So, for instance, waterfowl and mammals are distinguishable by qualities that simultaneously define each member and differentiate them from the members of other categories. Objects with defining qualities held by more than one category confuse the system by challenging its basic supposition of mutually exclusive characterizations. So, for instance, the platypus flummoxed early taxonomists because it sports a bill like a waterfowl yet grows fur like a mammal. We will see the political consequences of this classificatory system when we return to the consideration of the 1931 *Atlas* in the next section.

A key of "topographical items" and their symbols commonly used on revenue maps, which was reproduced in 1853 for an historical review of the surveys, further illustrates the revenue surveyors' emphasis on religious division. As cartography scholar J. B. Harley notes, keys often express a hierarchy of interest in regard to the landscape's objects, with items of perceived greater importance topping the list.[95] That the key begins with habitations, listed from most to least inhabited ("city or town, village, deserted village"), is not surprising. The next items ("haut or bazaar, pucka [fired-brick] fort, mud fort, pucka houses") also seem of predictable interest given the Company's commercial and military concerns. The notable absence of a listing for non-*pukka* houses (i.e., *kucca* houses made of dried mud or thatch) suggests that British interests did not extend to laboring classes,

[§§] It is possible that some area residents may have viewed these tombs as *dargah*s, as some consider one of them, that of Bakhtiyar Khan, today. However, the Daniells give no suggestion of this in their images of these two monuments (although they mislabel one as an *idgah*, see chapter 4).

who often could not afford the more solidly built homes of merchants and landowners. That places of dedicated religious activity ("pagoda or Hindoo temple," "musjid or Mahomedan temple") should precede instruments of state and commerce ("post offices, dak [mail] bungalow, indigo factory, silk factory, sugar factory") on the key's enumerated list demonstrates just how prominently religion featured into British imaginations of the Bihari landscape.[96]

Both the 1853 key and 1845 map of Chainpur illustrate the tendency of the British to classify Indians first according to religious categories, which commonly reflected British expectations better than Indian self-identification. Far from the mutually exclusive and antagonistic Hindu and Muslim communities of many British imaginations, actual practices and interactions demonstrated a complexity that belied such easy sorting. British persistence in their views of a bifurcated India, strictly separated into primarily religious communities (despite the evidence of many of their own surveys and personal encounters), suggests the impact of the scientific classification paradigm, the third ideal element of scientism. The reasons why Shahabad's revenue surveyors omitted Sufi tombs remain unclear, so the possibility arises that their ambiguous communal associations may have defied the reigning classificatory paradigm. As we shall see in most of the succeeding chapters, the government never lacked on-the-ground counterexamples that defied expectations for a strictly communalist division of Indian society, but bureaucratic expedience (expressing "practical" information through "uncluttered" reports, tables, and maps) often obstructed the expression of such instances in publications.

Despite their prosaic nature, the revenue survey maps had a significant public impact as the government sought to educate a newly imagined and gradually constituted Indian public, whose well-being they increasingly considered as their responsibility. Reflecting on the advantages of the boundary surveys, the Court of Directors in 1854 observed that "the determination of boundaries of Villages and Estates by an enquiry *on the spot* and their delineation on the survey maps" [my emphasis] would help defray conflicts over land ownership and perimeters (which were "attended occasionally with loss of life") and decrease the resulting court cases.[97] The quality of being "on the spot" had particular significance with its emphasis on direct, empirical observation, as we shall see in chapter 4. Meanwhile, the British preference to strictly define an object by fixing its location and borders in space also resonates here. In one instance, a revenue surveyor postponed an early survey of Patna because the city's periphery ambiguously included fields attached to neighboring villages, stymying his initial effort to determine distinct boundaries.[98]

The conjunction of empiricism and defining distinct objects in space through cartography quickly made possible the realization of another scientistic ideal. The aggregation of measurements made of fields and villages allowed for the computation of *pargana* sizes, while the aggregation of those allowed for the estimation of district sizes, and so on. All of these objects, therefore, could be reduced to quantifiable data, which is exactly what Shahabad's collector soon did in his *Statistics of Zillah Shahabad* (1849). The facts for "Pergunnah Chynpore" were straightforward: "There are 1,198 villages inhabited in

this Pergunnah, and of the recorded area there are about 3,125 acres of sand, 34,375 of jungle and hills, and 26,000 of water, leaving a productive area of 3,36,118 acres. The cultivation is very inferior to bad soil." Only the final sentence offers a qualified statement. The collector's report also includes a district map compiled by Sherwill.[99]

Hence, cartography derived from and helped promote scientistic notions, especially as its products increasingly found their way to the crystallizing public realm. A few years after the revenue survey's completion in Bengal, the lieutenant governor sought local authorities to encourage as wide a distribution of the revenue maps*** as possible.[100] This may have been the impetus for the publication of a large-sized, small-scale (4 miles to the inch) map of south Bihar printed in 1851 that was based on the revenue surveys. Signed by Captain Thuillier and Colonel Waugh of the Survey of India, based on the surveys of Sherwill and two other Europeans, drawn and printed by Shaik Peer Buskh and Shaik Meher Ally in India, and published in London, the map demonstrated how much scientific knowledge had become a multiethnic, transcontinental production by the nineteenth century. Its portrayal of various temples' positions reflect the continuing interest to depict religion geographically.[101]

Both private and government ventures promoted geographic learning among the Indian public, especially in learning. As early as 1824, when Bishop Reginald Heber visited a Church Missionary Society school in Benares, he noted that geography and "the use of the globes" figured in the curriculum of math, history, reading, writing, and the New Testament (and contrasted this with "the rubbish" students in the city's government college learned in their Ptolemaic-dominated astronomy classes).[102] By mid-century, at least some government schools educated Indian children to read official maps, trace rivers, indicate towns, and recognize topographical features in their district.[103] Certainly, this training arose, in part, from a government need for indigenous surveyors; in 1852, the government declared that all *patwari*s (village land accountants) had to be literate and able to measure land. Two decades later, when the government encountered Bihari resistance to the promotion of physical science in Patna College, it acceded but nevertheless hired a teacher for drawing, surveying, and physical geography.[104] When the eponymous hero of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) entered school he followed a curriculum that included surveying and mapmaking, which allowed many of his classmates to obtain positions with the Survey of India.[105] In this regard at least, the novelist's fictional world had its basis in the real one, since a plan for primary vernacular education in western Bengal in 1912 emphasized "the map of the village and its neighbourhood and geography, mainly directed to the chief physical features of the actual surroundings." The government considered this focus as contributing to training children to think for themselves and sharpen their powers of observation.[106] But the government of India likely also sought to educate about surveying in the effort to decrease the popular suspicion that continued to

*** In the Deccan, British officers suggested that maps be lithographed for economical duplication as early as 1847. Appadurai 1996, 122.

dog survey projects. In 1920, Surveyor J. A. Hubback hoped that the settlement operations themselves would educate the *raiyat*s (farmers) about the land and their rights. Unfortunately, however, at the time he wrote, Chainpur's conditions were worse for *raiyat*s than those of almost any other *pargana* in the district.[107]

Western-originated cartography[†††] and map literacy did not rely only on schools for dissemination; popular publications played an important role too. By the 1840s, for instance, J. B. Tassin published maps of cities, regions, provinces, and continents as well as a school atlas that could be purchased in booksellers found near large British cantonments.[108] One Tassin map of Bengal and Bihar represented the territory with enough detail that it depicted not only Chainpur, but a factory to the village's south. Reflecting the state's increasing liberality with their cartographic knowledge—so different from its attitudes during Rennell's time—the map trumpets that it is "Compiled from the most recent Surveys and best information in the possession of Government and private individuals."[109] Maps increasingly figured into vernacular texts on history, both sacred and secular. So, for instance, Robert Needham Cust included Hindi and Hindustani maps of ancient India in his Hindustani biography of Rama, *Waqa'i' Ramachandra* (1860), while Joseph Jacob published *Jughrafiyah i Pak Kitab* (1867) as a Hindustani catechism that taught biblical geography.[110]

Indian involvement in publishing maps and works on surveying intensified over the century. The author Vansidhara wrote a Hindi treatise on surveying entitled *Kshetra-chandrarikā*. Its Hindustani translation went through at least four printings between 1864 and 1876.[111] In 1910, Shroshthi Bhusan Cattopadhaya published his Hindi map of Shahabad entitled *Zela Sahavad*, which included Chainpur. Moreover, government publications routinely included one or more illustrative maps from the middle of the nineteenth century on. The British and Indian inclusion of published maps in books and classrooms reflected both the means and the results of the transformation of Indian urban and elite cultures by what Marshall McLuhan called the "logic of print."[112] The printed word—in contrast with the oral or written word—implied uniformity, corporate perspectives, precise repeatability, broad transmission of perspectives, and, thus, homogenization of views.[113]

The increasing prevalence of standardized maps, cartographical faith, and reliance on cartography for settling land disputes had a cumulative effect on the coalescing and increasingly self-conscious Indian public. As Benedict Anderson has shown, in the last three centuries, the confluence of public education, mass publications, and a national imagination culminated in nationalist movements and India, of course, was no exception. As a prelude to the successful mass involvement in independence movements, British imperial maps would serve as the frame within which South Asians could imagine the territorial

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[†††] Given the Indian contributions as guides, surveyors, draftsmen, and laborers, calling these mapping practices "European cartography" would be a misnomer.

dimension of a national identity. The 1901 atlas for the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* provided a viewfinder not only for Indian nationalism, but for Pakistani statehood too.

## MAPS AS DISCIPLINARY PROJECTION SCREENS

Whereas the revenue surveys demonstrated how British mapping practices perpetuated the sense that Hindus and Muslims represented mutually exclusive communalist groups in Shahabad's villages, the atlas of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* reflects how British mapping projected this conclusion on an all-India level. As the result of the state-sponsored mapping of the subcontinent that began with Rennell and extended beyond the onerous exertions of the Great Trigonometrical Survey, an authoritative outline of "India" emerged for both the state and the public. Its authority rested on the twin facts of the cartography's state sponsorship and its claims to scientific accuracy, demonstrating how each could lend credence to the other. Like much else in the government's information order, the very concepts used to understand Indians and their perceived differences in order to govern them became some of the tools by which Indians imagined themselves as a united, independent people (albeit, in divergent ways) in order to free themselves of that governance. Britons required precisely delineated borders for the sake of diplomacy and defense, while nationalists needed an icon. Successful modern nationalisms have tended to answer the question "Who are we as a nation?" using imagined communities definitively associated with a specific, bounded land. Hence, for both patriots and rulers, a standardized outline of India provided a screen upon which they could project their ideas about who resided within those exactly determined borders that found no known parallel on pre-British maps. Despite their divergences with British views of India, most nationalists relied on the state's vision of India's form and other conclusions derived from its information order, while largely accepting the claims to a unified, interrelated science that legitimated it.

The third edition of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1909–1931) in many ways represents the culmination of the British information order. In contrast with Francis Buchanan's surveys a century earlier—executed by a single team and left unpublished by the British government until nearly the end of its rule—this gazetteer shares with the general public officially collected information (though not all such information) from across its territories, including an entry on Chainpur. The editors' twin claims to authority reflects the interreliance of state and science. First, the editors—self-conscious of the "official authority that attaches to the work"—explain in the series' preface that almost "the whole of the work has been written by officials under orders of the Indian Government." Then they assure the reader that "special contributions from experts" supplement the officials' conclusions.[114] While on the one hand officials on the ground had the "local experience" related to the "on the spot," ocular authority discussed above, on the other hand, disciplinary experts complement this with an authoritatively "scientific" confirmation of the

everyday experiences of the officials. Their specialized fields of knowledge are also reflected in the names of the first volume's chapters, which signify not only specific topics but also the emergent sciences upon whose expertise the British drew: geology, meteorology, botany, zoology, and ethnology.

The rapid crystallization of new academic fields in the nineteenth century was reflected administratively as well. In 1815, soon after Buchanan completed his expansive survey, the EIC created the position of surveyor general of India to coordinate the disparate survey operations throughout British territories, Rennell having served only as surveyor general at Calcutta.[115] In 1851, the Company separated the Geological Survey of India from the geographical work of the Survey of India. The Indian government established the Archaeological Survey in 1861, the Botanical Survey in 1890, and the Zoological Survey in 1916.[116] Innovations in statistical demographics made possible the first all-India census in 1871, and succeeding censuses served as platforms to separately launch the Linguistic Survey in 1891 and the Ethnographic Survey in 1901.[‡‡‡] These multiple agencies also contrasted markedly with Buchanan's survey. When Buchanan visited Chainpur in 1813 in his seven-year effort to complete the first comprehensive survey of the Company's dominions in greater Bengal, he carried with him a laundry list of responsibilities (see appendix A).[117] This literally exhaustive agenda may appear absurd today because specialization's accelerating pace makes mastering so many topics improbable, at best. Indeed, even the term *cartography* was coined only in 1839. However, hitherto, mapmaking folded into the role of geographer[118] and even the landscape artist.[119] So, for instance, Rennell's *Memoir* includes an image of the fortress at Gwalior sketched "on the spot by Capt. I. Hickes" to memorialize the British conquest of the site.[120]

Despite this epistemic fission and mounting plurality, divergent disciplines remained interconnected and mutually related in the popular ideal of science. This lent science the perceived quality of a unified system of knowing. In large part, the first ideal of Western-originated science mentioned, quantifiability, made interconnection possible by providing a common mathematical and statistical language through which information could be communicated, understood, and compared. Although government officials would collect nonnumerical data—such as accounts of local practices, beliefs, and narratives—they would often appraise these merely as complementary to the statistical information most valued by scientism. The Home Department of the Government of India explicitly expressed this view when it established the India-wide Ethnographic Survey. This would rely on data provided by census collectors who went door-to-door for their household surveys that would then be abstracted and quantified. Its authorizing resolution declared that, "an ethnographic survey of India, and a record of the customs of the people is as

‡‡‡ In an apparent counterexample to this fragmentation of government agencies as more specialized disciplines emerged, the three independent survey branches reintegrated under the Survey of India in 1878. However, this was likely a result of the vagaries of the government's organizational preferences, as suggested when the revenue surveys were returned to provincial control in 1905. *Guide* 1992, 187.

necessary an incident of good administration as a cadastral survey of the land and a record of the rights of its tenants. *The census provides the necessary statistics: it remains to bring out and interpret the facts which lie behind the statistics*" [emphasis added].[121] The resolution's wording confers confident primacy on statistical information; so confident, in fact, that it takes the census data—which are, after all, quantifications abstracted from the household surveys—as the basis from which to determine ethnographic realities, instead of relying on the raw material of the surveys themselves.

As already noted, cartography offered another important vehicle for interconnectivity by providing a standardized frame identified as "India" within which the results of diverse disciplinary investigations could be projected. Perhaps the best example of this occurred in 1931 with the atlas published to accompany the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*.[122] If the encyclopedic *Gazetteer* represented one of the most ambitious expressions of the British information order, then its accompanying atlas testifies to the culmination of scientism's impact on British (and South Asian) understandings of India.

As one leafs through it, the atlas promotes a spatial, scientistic argument that perfectly conveys these abilities to exactly locate India and know it through the combined efforts of scientific disciplines. The first few plates of the atlas confidently draw the reader from a god's-eye view of the flattened globe toward increasingly detailed maps of India, the subcontinent looming ever larger like the destination of a self-assuredly striding traveller. The *Atlas*'s first plate situates India in the middle of a world map, one-fifth of which is pink, demarking Briton's imperial domains. Lines denoting sea lanes and telegraph lines present an India entwined in the entangling threads of a global marine and overland communication network with the other territories of the empire. The next map frames India in the more specific context of Africa, Central Asia, China, and the Indian Ocean. Most of the succeeding two dozen maps all rely on the view of India made popular since at least Rennell: an elongated diamond stretching from Baluchistan to Burma, the Hindu Kush to Cape Cormorin, leaving Ceylon to halfway peep over the map's lower border. Each of these maps presents India according to specific thematic content: vegetation, temperature, winds, rainfall, races, languages, religions, agriculture, minerals, archaeology, and political history, among others. A collection of provincial maps follows—including the one of Bihar and Orissa that locates Chainpur—before the volume concludes with sixteen city plans. The fact that the 1931 *Atlas* portrays this one village alone among the thousands of other Shahabad district villages demonstrates the resilience of government interest in Chainpur despite its relatively small significance culturally, archaeologically, administratively, and politically.

The 1931 *Atlas* represents a culmination of epistemic developments, impelled by British imperial needs and served by Indian local practices, that established the basis of an enduring model for South Asian ways of knowing the subcontinent and its people. After the initial map that imaginatively establishes a unity among Britain's far-flung dominions (albeit centered on India and not Britain), the atlas represents to the reader information on the physical and anthropological environment of India derived from the disciplines

emergent over the last centuries: geology, orography, botany, meteorology, demographics, ethnology, linguistics, archaeology, and historiography. Cumulatively, these multiple, interrelated depictions of its natural and social dimension imply a *total view* of India as a singular, self-contained object that can be examined from afar or up close with as much control as a scientist examining a leaf under a microscope. This relies both on a perceived ideal of science that all natural and human phenomena can potentially be understood through science and on a faith in cartography that it produces a complete view of terrain with large-scale maps amalgamating into increasingly more distant, small-scale representations including more space with less detail. (Indeed, the atlas's sequence—moving from the most distant view to the closest—reverses this amalgamation, thus asserting a confidence that the *resulting* distant view can be read first). This trust existed despite cartographers' admissions that the earth's curvature meant that large-scale maps like those from the revenue surveys could not simply be combined to create a more distant view. Meanwhile, by expressing the data created by scientific disciplines within the boundary-defined space labeled "India," the atlas editors facilitated the efforts of disciplinary specialists to translate their data into information both available and intelligible to the public.

The *Atlas*'s repeated use of the same base map reaffirms its framing as definitive and the image as stable. In other words, the form of India, determined by its geographically determined borders and emptied of all content except for its unimpeachable Indianness, served as a medium that translated abstracted quantifications into visual forms for a consuming public—both Indian and British. This blank form acted as a screen upon which could be projected any vision of the country. Its two features—blankness and definitively drawn, publicly accepted, exclusive borders—together suggested some inherent homogeneity among those within. The degree to which an Indian essence imbues the India map for certain viewers becomes clear when, as form alone, the map attains the status of icon, denoting national pride and identity. The success of this projection as a persuasive representation of India can be readily ascertained by its use by early twentieth century nationalists. Historian Gyan Prakash has argued that Indian translations of Western science worked to ultimately undermine British hegemony—ironic, given that the purported superiority of that science succeeded for so long in helping persuade many Indians to submit to that hegemony. Moreover, Prakash demonstrates that these translations simultaneously relied upon and served an imagined nation.[123] Perhaps no example best manifests this in the context of cartography than the Bharat Mata Mandir in Benares (see Illustration 2.4). Inaugurated in 1936 by no less a nationalist than Mohandas Gandhi, the temple situates an expansive marble relief map of India as the centrally installed *murti* (devotional image). The distinctiveness of this representation becomes more apparent when contrasted with a seventeenth-century Mughal miniature painting that depicts a towering Jahangir embracing an almost equally tall Shah Abbas Safavi as they stand atop the arc of the globe. Despite the cartographic detail that included rivers, landmasses, and the names of significant cities, the image offers no sense of the geographical shape of

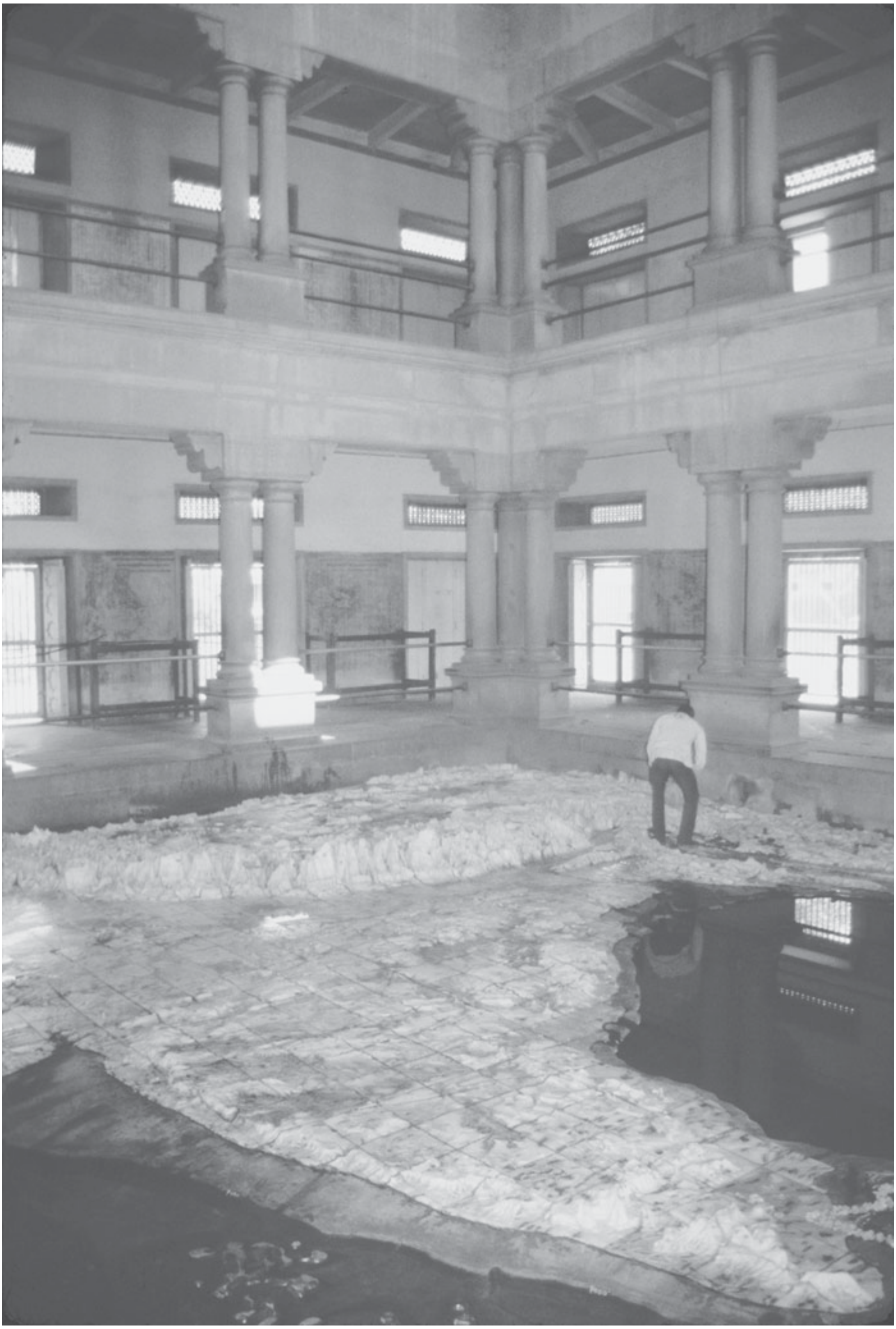

ILLUSTRATION 2.4. Bharat Mata Mandir interior, Benares. 1990.

states, even Jahangir's. Only the lion and lamb upon which the two respective figures stand suggest the extent of each emperor's realms, but none with the sense of definitiveness and boundedness that most British imperial and Indian nationalist maps would include as a matter of course.

Yet, for our purposes, the most important feature of the atlas is the centrality of the category of religion and its integration into the disciplinary information expressed via the maps. A classification system that precisely delineates classes of items defines each of the thematic maps. Just as certainly as one map distinguishes places with post-tertiary rocks from those with Gondwana rocks, and another the regions growing wheat from those harvesting barley, so areas dominated by Aryan languages are strictly delineated from those with non-Aryan ones and territories of purportedly Turko-Iranian races from those with Indo-Aryan or Dravidian ones. The *Atlas*'s standard map of India, replicated repeatedly to communicate a specific discipline's findings, demonstrates the final ideal element of scientism: the interconnectivity of disciplines. Despite the highly varied types of information projected onto this map, its repeated use allowed for the comparison *and* interrelation of data from linguistics, ethnology, historiography, and demographics. British cartography had manifested this dynamic long before 1931, but perhaps never so forcefully.[§§§] That various government institutions contributed materials to the atlas project[124] demonstrates how officials viewed competing agencies as contributing to a more complete understanding of India through interconnected disciplines. Although by 1931, as the atlas demonstrates, linguistic and racial categories served as important organizing principles for imperial attempts to know Indians, religion remained most central.

The 1931 *Atlas* demonstrates how cartographic representations could feature not only such religious categories spatially, but temporally as well. Four maps depict India's political landscape over as many periods: 1765, 1805, 1837, and 1857. Each map indicates the subcontinent's regions (e.g., Kashmir, Behar, Sind) and provides the borders of various states (e.g., Oudh, Mysore, Travancore). Most significantly for our interests, the maps color each state: yellow for "Hindu territory," green for "Muhammadan territory," and red for "British territory." These maps reflect a common British historiographical practice of identifying states according to the religion of the ruler so, for instance, the Nizam of Hyderabad's territories and state are indicated as Muslim because the nizam was. They suggest that the ruler's religious culture defined his territory and, presumably, his subjects in a manner perhaps reminiscent of post-Reformation Europe, when many Catholic and Protestant princes deigned that their subjects, chameleon-like, should adapt the religion of their sovereign. (Indeed, propaganda maps played a prominent role

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§§§ Seventeenth-century population estimates in Madras, Masulipatnam, and Bombay all relied on cartographical information as did H. T. Colebrooke's demographic endeavors in the eighteenth century and Buchanan's in the nineteenth. Since its beginnings, the Census of India had partnered with the Survey of India to exchange information for their mutual benefit, while the former has joined the Linguistic Survey of India and Ethnographic Survey of India in producing thematic maps to present their findings. Prasad 1967, iii–iv.

in the religious wars of seventeenth-century Europe.)[125] However, although South Asian states had court cultures that used religious ritual, language, and authority to legitimate the monarch, none demanded universal conversion. Even that poster-child of intolerant rule, Aurangzeb, patronized Hindu temples and rescinded the poll-tax (*jizya*) he had leveled earlier on non-Muslims. Significantly, the *Atlas*'s historical maps describe the Raj's territories as "British," not Christian, reflecting British inclinations to view Indian identities as religiously multiple and British identity as nationalistically singular. Viewing them in sequence, the maps offer a progression from a dappled and divided yellow and green India to the gradual expansion of a red that envelopes and unites the subcontinent. Hence, maps served as tools of disciplinary projection, communalist emphasis, and government self-promotion.

However, it was the maps used to depict India's prevailing religions in the 1931 *Atlas*, compiled from census materials and translating demographic statistics into visual form, that foreshadowed the most terrible legacy of science and religious politics in British India. A single page in the atlas contains four maps. Each portrays with intensifying color the varying percentage that a religious group represents of the overall population: one for Hindus, another for Muhammadans, yet another for Christians, and a final one for Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains. Despite the separate maps, most communities are assigned a different color. Most of the subcontinent is swathed in red, nearly like a sadhu's robes, due to its Hindu majority. Puddles of blue in Orissa, Assam, and the south indicate Christian populations. Burma's yellowing evidences its Buddhist majority. But from a post-independence perspective, the most eye-catching of these pre-partition maps depicts Muslim concentrations, the dark green shades of Baluchistan, Sind, western Punjab, and eastern Bengal****: providing a prescient depiction of today's Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Sixteen years after the *Atlas*'s publication, the borders of India that Britons had repeatedly defined, depicted, and defended would be redrawn. In 1947, following agitation by some Muslims fearful of their place in an independent, Hindu-majority India, the British prepared to end their rule with the partition of the subcontinent into two separate nations: India and Pakistan. Reliant on census data based on the same essentialized and mutually exclusive categories of religious community operative among the British since before Rennell definitively framed India, a British lawyer without any experience in South Asia was given five weeks to divide 400 million people into two new nations. Based on the same statistical information that he used, the 1931 atlas's dark green concentrations nearly conform to what would become Pakistan's territory.†††† This catastrophically demonstrated Harley's argument "that while the atlas makers were attempting to produce scientific maps of *territorial* space, they were also ineluctably generating images of *social* space."[126] Nevertheless, Chainpur remained in India because of its larger Hindu

**** These small quarter maps omit Kashmir and Ladakh.

†††† What became Bangladesh in 1971 originated as Pakistan's "East Wing" in 1947.

population. As testament to lives interwoven into the area's social fabric, most of the Chainpur area's many Muslims declined to join the few who migrated to Pakistan.

## CONCLUSION

It was no coincidence that empire served as an important incubator for cartography. Indeed, the *Oxford English Dictionary* ascribes the first use of the term *cartography* to explorer and orientalist Richard Burton as he described a map in Africa.[127] I hesitate to disagree with Mathew H. Edney's authoritative account of British mapping of India when he argues that "the British surveys in India are more European than colonial in their conception." However, no triangulation survey in mainland Europe matched both the sophistication and completeness of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (1824–1846) or India's Great Trigonometrical Survey (GTS). The survey of British occupied Ireland, as its name portends, was compelled by military concerns and overshadowed the effort of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain (f. 1791), which restricted its cartographic efforts to southern England in preparation for an anticipated French invasion.[128] Even when they left unsaid the pragmatic reasons for the work, supporters of such expansive and expensive projects often valorized cartography's worth as the epitome of scientific investigation. In their efforts to legitimate their endeavors and results, period maps, reports, and accounts demonstrate how many Britons and Indians imbued Western-originated cartography with the four ideals of united science propounded in scientism: complete quantifiability and objectivity, scientific classification, interconnectivity, and a totalizing view.

At the same time, Britons—and Indian elites—increasingly viewed religion as the antithesis of many of these ideals. If not all religion, then at least the more enthusiastic (e.g., Evangelicalism) and less advanced (e.g., Hinduism) strains suffered from a lack of rationalism and objectivity according to some. European Christianity appeared increasingly marginalized as the gathering specter of secularism rebuffed its totalizing vision and relegated it to the private realm. Meanwhile, the ascent of scientism and its promise of an alternative, scientific totalizing view aiding the progressive improvement of all who embraced it increasingly challenged Christian salvation narratives and gradually dismantled the connections Christian theology once managed with natural philosophy. Many Indians, among others, feared it would do the same with Hindu and Islamic perspectives.

Although provincial and regional maps of Bihar included Chainpur far more than any other village, most cartographical depictions of Chainpur did not have the religious inflections found in Rennell's 1782 *Hindoostan* map, Sherwill's 1845 revenue map, or the *Gazetteer*'s 1931 atlas. Nevertheless, the prominent role of religious categories even in such exemplary productions of supposedly secular, Western-originated science demonstrates how pervasively these categories suffused British information projects and undermined the reputed objective distance of scientism's science.

# First Theoretical Interlude

## THE DYNAMICS OF COMPARISON AND CLASSIFICATION

### ACTS OF COMPARISON

The dynamic of comparison relies on the tension between differentiation and association, two central acts in any effort of cognition. If two items are entirely different or completely the same, they cannot be compared. The common adage suggesting the incommensurability of two objects—"it's like comparing apples and oranges"—is both accurate and misleading. *Complementing* the differences between apples and oranges (color, shape, texture, taste, structure) is an association that allows comparison between the two: the category "fruit." We always premise an effort to compare on an assumption that both distinction and common ground exist between the compared items.

In order to illustrate this dynamic most clearly, an example of extreme Christocentric contrast will serve even though, as examples in the next chapter demonstrate, not all Christians made such stark comparisons. In 1836, Daniel Wilson, the bishop of Calcutta, wrote: "India is waiting for the salvation of God. She is moving on gradually, but surely, towards that measure of illumination, when the absurd metaphysical abstractions, and impure idolatries of Hindooism must fall; and, together with the intolerant fierceness of Muhammedanism, yield to the benevolence and grace of Christian truth."[1]

When Bishop Wilson makes this reflection, he implicitly works through three stages of comparison, as demonstrated in Table 1TI.1. First (Table 1TI.1a), the bishop identifies three entities he judges comparable: presumably, because they all are religions in India:

TABLE 1TI.1.
The three stages of Bishop Wilson's comparison

Table 1TI.1a. Stage 1.

**Religions**

| **Hindooism** | **Muhammedanism** | **Christianity** |
|---|---|---|

Second, he qualifies their differences with one another through associated qualities (Table 1TI.1b):

Table 1TI.1b. Stage 2.

**Religions**

| **Hindooism** | **Muhammedanism** | **Christianity** |
|---|---|---|
| absurd metaphysical abstractions and impure idolatries | intolerant fierceness | benevolence and grace |

Finally, he associates two of these entities with one another while distinguishing the third from both (Table 1TI.1c):

Table 1TI.1c. Stage 3.

**Religions**

<table>
<tr><th>Hindooism</th><th>Muhammedanism</th><th>Christianity</th></tr>
<tr><td>absurd metaphysical abstractions and impure idolatries</td><td>intolerant fierceness</td><td>benevolence and grace</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">must yield to Christianity</td><td>will be yielded to</td></tr>
</table>

The bishop's effort to understand Hinduism and Islam relative to Christianity does not differ essentially from my recognition of appliances and decorations relative to furniture in my home. I know what furniture is in part because of what I associate with that category (e.g., chairs, tables, bookcases) and what I differentiate from it (e.g., ovens, pictures, dust bunnies). It would be difficult for me to know furniture without both differentiation and association.

Although some distinctions might appear self-evident (e.g., "sharp and soft"), Jonathan Z. Smith, foremost scholar in the role of comparison for the study of religions, underlines the deliberateness with which we distinguish and compare people and their productions.

Smith explains that "comparison requires the postulation of difference as the grounds of its being interesting (rather than tautological) and a methodical manipulation of difference, a playing across the 'gap' in the service of some useful end."[2] Each of the basic features in Smith's statement applies to Wilson's statement.

(1) "…the postulation of difference…" Comparison inherently relies upon the perception of variance between the units under consideration. This is a postulation because differences are not naturally given or self-evident; they rely upon human claims of difference. Although comparison is initiated by a sense of difference in at least one facet of the individuals or groups under consideration, it need affirm no absolute difference. For instance, I recognize that my neighbors have different preferences in clothing: some dress more warmly than I do, others less warmly, and others exactly as I do. This does not make any of them wholly different to me. Ultimately, each comparison serves a particular concern or set of concerns. In Wilson's case, he promotes a stark differentia-tion between units he identifies as "Hindooism," "Muhammedanism," and "Christianity." The fact that the first term had only been coined about six decades earlier and that many so-called Hindus would not have used it to describe their own "religion"—another term of variable usage—demonstrates that not only the *difference between* these units but even their *existence* cannot be taken for granted.

(2) "…as the grounds of its being interesting…." The comparison must engage observers and, so, the basis of the comparison relies on their interests. There are no limits to what can be compared, only to the interest that makes the effort worthwhile. Wilson apparently assumed an audience's interest in understanding the various divergences and similarities among the three religions. Presumably most of his particular readership would have found distinctions between engine lubricants less so.

(3) "…a methodical manipulation of difference…." Not only do objects not naturally give themselves to comparison, but the manner of comparing them also requires a choice. Smith explains that five methods of anthropological comparison exist: ethnographic, encyclopedic, morphological, evolutionary, and statistical.* The next two chapters will consider the first in the context of British India, and subsequent chapters the others. No matter the mode, each comparison relies on a theme or "key" by which the comparison can be made methodically and seem sensible.

(4) "…playing across the 'gap'…." Difference supposes some distance between juxtaposed individuals or groups. The act of comparison not only relies on the postulation of difference, it also may reinscribe the perception of difference if it

* Smith actually identifies two others: structuralist comparison and systematic description and comparison. However, he admits these to be expressions of morphological and ethnographic comparison, respectively, and so we need not go into detail here regarding them. Smith 1982, 25–26.

emphasizes this distance. Wilson's comparison both postulates gaps between Hinduism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity and emphatically underlines the differences. For these authors, the distance between these categories is one of maximal significance given the possibly eternal consequences for being on one side or the other.

(5) "...in the service of some useful end." Comparisons result from effort motivated by an interest in the outcome. This does not necessarily predetermine the outcome, but the practicality of specific conclusions must be considered. Wilson emphasizes distinctions between religions in order to energize Christian proselytizers to shepherd the unsaved across the gap and into the Christian fold. He hopes to rally his coreligionists in a struggle that ideally will empty the other categories of members by converting them to Christianity. Again, these represent an extreme in Christocentric comparison that best highlights these elements of comparison. Other examples in the next chapter will demonstrate less stridently Christocentric views.

## CLASSIFICATION: SORTING OUT THE WORLD

Basically, classification provides a tool to manage variation among observed objects, phenomena, or people.[3] It imposes a "cognitive economy" on the innumerable items that we encounter in our everyday experience,[4] relying on comparison to create groups based on similarity and difference. If we encounter a spider (which we distinguish from an ant), we might rely upon a differentiation between "poisonous" and "harmless" to guide our response. When we meet a person, we depend on classifications such as "stranger," "friend," "family," "acquaintance," and "enemy" to adjust our interactions. At times, we rely on the classifications others have imposed on certain realms, such as the librarian's categorization of books and the storeowner's sorting of merchandise. In yet other instances, our classifications conflict with those of others, as when the census taker fails to have a category with which one identifies or when a remark one person makes as a joke is taken by another as a slander. Although categories are not the same as the items with which they are associated, they can be confused as such and act as metonyms. Cribbing Clifford Geertz's famous remark regarding symbols, I would argue that classifications provide models *of* reality and models *for* reality.[5]

Medieval Christian classifications of humanity certainly reflected this. The dominance of the four classes (Christian, Jew, Saracen, and idolater) could be seen in French legal opinions, a Jewish merchant's travelogue, and catalogs of religions.[6] In Marco Polo's thirteenth-century narrative, Mongol emperor Kublai Khan purportedly states "There are four great Prophets who are reverenced and worshiped by the different classes of mankind. The Christians regard Jesus Christ as their divinity; the Saracens, Mahomet; the

Jews, Moses; and the idolaters, Sogomombar-kan,[†] the most eminent amongst their idols." Given the suspicions about this text, the passage may reflect more of a contemporary Christian than Mongol view, especially since Polo suggests the Khan prefers "the faith of Christians as the truest and the best."[7]

The Khan's purported preference for Christianity demonstrates how some classification systems are structured according to not only the categories used, but also how these relate with one another. In this case, the supposed Khan begins with the presumption of four classes of humanity. He associates them with one another because they each accord with a prophet/divinity. Who each reveres distinguishes each group from one another. All classifications adhere to this general approach. However, not all classification systems take the alleged Khan's next step: ranking one category ("the faith of Christians") above the others. Such a move should not be taken for granted. For instance, a schoolmaster might divide any given body of similarly aged students into three classes. If the division occurs according to the alphabetical order of their names (A–H, I–O, P–Z), then the relationship between the various classes is incidental. If, however, the schoolmaster divides the students according to perceived aptitude (best, average, worst), then their classification becomes meaningful because of the relationship of the groups. The structure of the classification, therefore, provides insight into the ideology behind its construction.

In order to understand the medieval Christian classificatory view and its recurring effect on European views of religion into the present, we need to unpack its ideology yet further. Medieval Western knowledge owed its greatest philosophical debt to Plato and Aristotle. Although these two classical authors diverged in significant ways, they shared some similar notions of classification. First, both believed each category was distinguished by a specific essence. The ancient philosophers declared that these essences were not known just from the observation of individuals and how they differed from one another, but from the recognition of a valued ideal to which individuals either cohere or diverge.[8] Medieval Christians, therefore, projected a series of progressive bifurcations that both developed the fourfold division of humanity and distinguished Christians as the most valued group (Table 1TI.2).

TABLE 1TI.2.
Stages of medieval Christian comparison of humanity.

Table 1TI.2a. Stage 1.

**Humanity**

| **Do believe in one god** | **Do not believe in one god** |
| --- | --- |
| Christians, Jews, and Saracens (+) | |
| | Idolaters (–) |

[†] Possibly "Shakyamuni," which was Gautama Buddha's given name.

Table 1TI.2b. Stage 2.

**Humanity**

| **Believe in one god** | | **Do not believe in one god** |
|---|---|---|
| **Do acknowledge Jesus** | **Do not acknowledge Jesus** | |
| Christians and Saracens (+) | | |
| | Jews | |
| | | Idolaters (–) |

Table 1TI.2c. Stage 3.

**Humanity**

| **Believe in one god** | | | **Do not believe in one god** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Acknowledge Jesus** | | **Do not acknowledge Jesus** | |
| **Do believe in Jesus as the son of GOD** | **Do not believe in Jesus as the son of GOD** | | |
| Christians (+) | | | |
| | Saracens | | |
| | | Jews | |
| | | | Idolaters (–) |

This set of bifurcations successfully valorizes Christians by posing a series of theological characterizations to which a group either conforms or does not. This process negatively defines non-Christian communities, therefore, through their non-conformity to Christian doctrine.

This schematic portrayal oversimplifies the valuation of the different groups. While it appears that proximity to church doctrine would lead to greater Christian appreciation for a group, in fact the opposite often became the case. The rejection of Jesus as God's son despite many other theological similarities made Saracens more dangerous in the eyes of many Christians, just as Jews often seemed more odious than idolaters to some. At times, similarity—if not familiarity—breeds contempt. Notably, medieval views of humanity took as natural groups "nations" and "peoples," not systems of religion. Hence, they differentiated between Saracens and Christians, not Islam and Christianity:

a benchmark for the changing understandings of "religion" among future Europeans outlined in chapter 1.[9] These bifurcations seemed to follow the providential narrative constructed through particular readings of the Bible. The Hebrews' flight from and God's wrath upon the idolatrous Egyptians separated Jews from pagans. The belief in Jesus as Christ divided Christians from Jews (a view that ignored the Jewishness of Jesus, his apostles, and most early followers). This progressive perfection, in which each subsequent development represents a degree of improvement over its predecessor, found reinforcement in Aristotle's notion of the Great Chain of Being that became popular in late medieval Europe.[10]

However, the unstable position of Saracens in Christian ordering—both categorically (sometimes subsumed as heretics) and qualitatively (sometimes superior to Jews)—reflected both their presence outside the biblical narrative and the challenge their successes posed to European Christians' providential teleology. The startling expansion of Muslim power from Arabia to Iberia in the west and to the Indus River in the east during Islam's first century not only led to the eclipse of Christians' political power in their former heartland of north Africa (recall that Augustine hailed from this region) but to the generally voluntary conversion of much of its population. Although the Reconquista's final success in the Iberian peninsula in 1492 offered some assuagement, it could not overcome the bitter failure of centuries of crusades to permanently displace Muslim control from even the one city that most mattered: Jerusalem. So, different authors variously classified Muslims as either heretics or Gentiles. Dante opted for the former, consigning the Prophet Muhammad and his son-in-law Ali as disseminators "of strife and schism"[11] to the eighth level of hell, suffering the cleaving of their bodies into halves in mimicry of their division of the body of Christ—the church. Other European authors depicted Muslims as idolators (ironic, given later stereotypes regarding their reputed intolerance of Hindu iconography). The elasticity in the meaning of the category demonstrates that these terms often shifted in meaning depending on author, audience, and context. Indeed, the Anglican Church's Common Book of Prayer, introduced just before the first English contact with India, recognized "Turks" as their own category. In one of its established prayers for Good Friday, the text asked God to "have mercy upon all Jewes, Turkes, Infidels, and heretikes, and take from them all ignoraunce, hardnes of heart, and contempt of thy word" [*sic*].[12]

Significantly, this medieval classification system—based on the process of binary differentiation—admitted of no possible overlap between categories. That is to say, no individual could belong to more than one class among comparable categories. This was so for two reasons. First, the Aristotilean emphasis on essences allowed individuals only one identity because they either did or did not carry the mark of a particular category. Hence individuals were not compared with one another outside of categories since any quality apart from the categorical mark was meaningless. Second, doctrinal regimentation meant the strict policing of membership to the central category: Christian. Orthoprax and orthodox coherence demonstrated membership. Thus, church authorities withdrew

membership by excommunicating an individual—that is, denying her or him access to receiving ritual communion.

That a classificatory system would assign individuals to only one class (e.g., that animal is either a cat or a dog) might appear self-evident until we recognize that many folk classification schemes allow for messy, overlapping categories of belonging. For instance, Anglophones commonly differentiate humans from animals—treating each as an independent category (e.g., she did not allow animals in her house)—while recognizing that, biologically, humans *are* animals. Meanwhile, Hindi and Urdu speakers often refer to a close, older friend as "auntie" or *chacha* (uncle), seemingly confusing friends for family. Meanwhile, the impulse to sort individuals into single, discrete categories is illustrated by the hesitancy of some to view "auntie" as a Hindi or Urdu word given its English origins. Hence, nationalist movements in their jealous effort to starkly differentiate "native" from "foreign" often try to purge terminology that originates elsewhere (hence, taking *chacha* to the airport means taking him to the *havai adda*).

Overall, therefore, four elements characterized the fourfold medieval Christian classification of humanity. First, it relied on a Platonic and Aristotelian system of successive dichotomous divisions. Second, each division created a category based on a particular essence found in specific individuals. Third, this system reflected a providential teleology, however troubled by Muslim recalcitrance. Finally, individuals belonged to one, and only one, category. Despite the theological upheavals of the Reformation and the ideological challenges of encounters with cultures previously unknown to Europeans, this classification system survived remarkably well into the modern period and Britons, among others, brought it with them to South Asia. Indeed, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg (d. 1719), the first Protestant missionary in South Asia, asked Tamils "Among the Four different Religions of the World, which is the most proper to render us happy in the next World?"[13] During the course of imperial expansion and the formation of a secular discipline for the study of religion, alternative systems of comparison and classification influenced by scientific norms competed with this older model. Despite its declining use, the fourfold classification continued to serve some into at least the twentieth century, as the following chapter's examples shall demonstrate. Meanwhile, as Ziegenbalg's words demonstrate, European classifications of humanity increasingly relied on religions as categories, not only nations and races as before. In time, *religion*, *nation*, and *race* would serve as very particularly defined metacategories of comparison.

We find thus that the wisdom of their gods is foolishness; their power, weakness; their love, hatred; their mercy, cruelty; their holiness, sin; their chastity, licentiousness. They are a true picture of sin. What, then, can we expect from their worshippers? A nation is never superior to the gods it worships. Dark, therefore, is the picture which we have to draw of the morals, both of the Mahometans and of the Hindoos in India. The prevalent sin of the Mahometans is prolifigacy; that of the Hindoos, an entire disregard to truth. In other respects they resemble each other. [*sic*]

No earthly power is able to destroy this spiritual empire of the Wicked One. A stronger power and more effectual means are absolutely necessary. And these we find in THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

—C. B. LEUPOLT, *Recollections of an Indian Missionary* (1846), 43, 59.

# 3

# Christocentric Travel Writing

## DYNAMICS OF COMPARISON AND CLASSIFICATION

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SUCH EXTREME DICHOTOMIES by Christian missionaries like Leupolt provide ready examples of radical, cultural juxtapositions that critics of imperialism and proselytization have used to manufacture their own binaries in regard to Eurocentism. Ironically, those who would most disagree with such infamous examples of ethnocentric hubris have—through their own writing—sometimes helped them become the better known texts from British India. Such instances include Thomas Babington Macauley's "Minute on Education," equating the worth of all Indian literature to one shelf of European writing, and John Mill's *History of British India*, trumpeting the superior merits of British civilization in India relative to its Hindu and Muslim antecedents. In these contexts, comparison appears to be inherently tantamount to denigration and moralistic judgment, leading some today to idealistically reject comparison in favor of "understanding other cultures on their own terms." However well intentioned, such endeavors are unlikely to succeed because they require the impossible: the complete abrogation of our subjectivity, the secure bracketing of our cultural inheritance, and the total transcendence of our personal experiences in the moment of intersocial contact.

Instead of naively renouncing comparison, we need to understand better its various operations and forms. All Britons juxtaposed their society to India's in some manner, but they differed in their approaches and categories, with many drawing very different conclusions from Leupolt, Macauley, and Mill. All British efforts to know India, Indians, and their religions (and Indian efforts to know Britain, Britons, and their religions) necessarily depended upon some operation of comparison because comparison stands central to human perception, thinking, and knowledge. Walking into a familiar room, we notice what has changed. Deciding between options, we compare the pros and cons. Learning about other cultures, we note how their languages, customs, and remembered pasts vary from and overlap with our own. Most basically, humans observe phenomena, objects, and others, and then compare and classify them. Forms of classification, too, vary and the inevitable choice of one inherently shapes the information that results.

My argument that religion served as the primary category of comparison in British understandings of South Asia requires an examination of the particular practices of comparison and classification with which Britons engaged their surroundings and the divergence these represented from earlier, indigenous models. Although they used a wide variety of representations to express the results of comparison—such as ethnographies, encyclopedias, and statistics—Britons increasingly privileged those that best met scientism's expectations. This chapter examines one mode of comparison in particular—the ethnographic—in the form of Christocentric travelogues. Following this, the second theoretical interlude will outline the other modes of comparison before the next chapter further demonstrates the qualities of ethnography, but as seen in humanistic travelogues. Each of the subsequent three chapters will consider the expression of a different mode of comparison in the context of a specific, coalescing discipline.

We begin with the ethnographic mode because it typified the travelogues through which Britons first learned about South Asians. In particular, this chapter examines the importance of Christian theology as an episteme by which Europeans shaped their understandings of others from the medieval period into the modern. Although the first noncartographical images of Chainpur derived from the visual travelogue of Thomas and William Daniell, we must wait until the next chapter to consider them, as these painters represent comparisons based primarily on humanism, an ideology that both competed with theology as a paradigm for explaining cultural difference and suffused the disciplines investigated in subsequent chapters. Hence, this chapter considers the Christian theologies that informed the travelogues of Leupolt, William Bowley, and other Christians by which many Europeans and Indians virtually encountered Chainpur and its region. Their Christocentric comparisons often echoed those promoted by the medieval church, allowing us an insight both into the comparative inheritance of Christian Britons and into the divergent comparative paradigms promoted by some forms of modern theology.

The chapter begins with an explanation of the ethnographic mode of comparison. It then considers the Christian theological inflections that informed early modern European

travelogues, which served as the genesis for the modern ethnographic discipline of anthropology. A consideration of middle-period South Asian categories of comparison helps establish the differences engendered during—though not entirely because of—British rule. The chapter culminates in the analysis of three Christocentric models of comparison operative during the Raj, with examples from travelogue descriptions of Chainpur and its surroundings. In the following discussion, I occasionally will use *identity* and *category* interchangeably, not because they are entirely synonymous but because in the context of the following texts they are inherently related.

## TRAVELOGUES: ETHNOGRAPHIC COMPARISON AND THEOLOGICAL INFLECTIONS

Among the five methods by which people manipulate difference in order to perform cultural comparison, the ethnographic may appear the least rigorous and systematic. Ethnographic representations commonly compare through the traveller's eyes, portraying differences and similarities with the traveller's culture anecdotally via illustrative encounters. Whether in the form of a travel journal comprised of daily entries or as a list of conclusions regarding various peoples encountered, a travelogue records one's experiences grappling with life in a foreign place and one's encounters with its unfamiliar residents through reference to "home." Since each encounter that evokes comparison occurs (or appears to occur) haphazardly, randomly arising due to the accidents of travel, the comparisons often do not seem methodical and the information derived from such comparisons appear organized only by the traveller's itinerary.[1]

The voyager puts herself in the way of contrast as she impels herself to leave the realm of the understood (or, the more understood), thus demonstrating the spatial quality of this comparative mode. The traveling comparativist commonly moves from a familiar center into realms of varying, if not decreasing, familiarity. It is as if she and her audience rely on an understood map that is centered on home, slowly fading into terra incognito through tentatively named places and sketchily drawn regions perennially bordered by the utterly unknown at the map's margins. The thirteenth-century world map found in a Westminster Abbey psalter famously depicts this quality with the visual peopling of its periphery by inhabitants with such marvelous grotesqueries as faces in their chests and feet large enough to shade their bodies. For many nineteenth-century British travellers, what and whom they met often struck them as "curious," "marvelous," and "despicable" in an understood contrast with home. Adjectives describing the unusual often tended toward extremes. The themes of disorientation and danger in odysseys to liminal places are endemic in literature from the zenith of British imperialism, such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), E. M. Forster's *Passage to India* (1924), and George Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934), although so is the possibility that some Europeans might find something personally familiar in their expatriate context that did not exist in their native one.

The emotional tensions often found in travelogues reflect the transparently subjective nature of ethnographic comparison. Because the comparison unfolds lockstep with the author's journey, the audience immediately recognizes the centrality of the author's perspective. Of course, comparison always involves subjectivity. All comparativists—no matter what their method—not only choose what to compare and how, but also through what categories the comparisons will occur: choices influenced by their sociocultural context. For better or for worse (or for both), the ethnographic comparative mode makes the influence of this context most apparent.

An important shift occurred at the end of the Middle Ages in terms of the sociocultural context of European ethnography that established the distinction between Christocentric and humanist travelogues. As Joan-Pau Rubiés portrays in his important survey *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance*, the impact of humanism slowly opened new realms of interest for Western authors and audiences who had previously encountered strangers with an entirely theological interest in mind. Like other forms of knowledge at that time, travelogues necessarily served the concerns of the reigning Christian theological paradigm, which required the subservience of science as "the handmaiden of theology." In fact, one might say that theology represented one of the only disciplines in Christian Europe, since few other contemporary forms of knowledge existed that conformed with our definition of "discipline" in chapter 1: as a self-regulating community relying on specific methods and theories to maintain specialized knowledge. The eventual, post-Renaissance contestation between theological and scientific authority would have its dramatic moments—such as Galileo's forced recantation of a heliocentric universe—but the tension is better characterized as a series of smaller challenges between inherently intertwined and nearly indistinguishable interests we now identify as "religion" and "science." Some of these tensions can be found in the travelogues of the early modern period. Although divine providentialism continued to characterize many travelogues in this era, others came to be informed by humanism's moral particularism. While the next chapter will consider this change in more detail, here we will outline the character of Christocentric travelogues. These not only represented the dominant approach to ethnographic comparison for medieval Europeans, but provided an abiding influence in later European accounts, despite the humanist challenge and changes within European Christianity.

Rubiés outlines three features of this providentialist-informed worldview as evidenced in Renaissance travelogues written by Europeans visiting South India. First, their authors made their observations and drew their comparisons entirely from within a "Christian moral and eschatological order." This paradigm structured all encounters within a comparative frame based on a God-directed history expected to end with the triumph of Christians over other peoples. This teleologically structured order shaped the classification of the world's population into four classes of people mentioned earlier: Christians, Jews who had eschewed idolatry but also had rejected Christ, Saracens (i.e., Muslims) whom Muhammad had led astray from Christendom, and idolaters who committed the same

crimes as the biblical Gentiles. The nonfamiliar (i.e., non-Christians) might be "marvelous" and worthy of comparison, but by necessity must be inferior because of their failure to conform to the Catholic moral and ritual order. Second, Rubiés explains that this order also justified only certain forms of traveling, namely pilgrimage, crusade, and mission. Because of the centrally structured quality of the church and its prominence in much of medieval society, travellers remained tied to church authority in the context of playing out these roles as defined for them. Traveling for its own sake would not be considered legitimate until the advent of humanism. Finally, for the mediaeval Latin church, providence offered the sole source of meaning. Because that providence as it guided the world had established the church as its sole, diminutive partner on earth, encounters outside the realm of the church occurred beyond the realm of grace and could serve only to illustrate the perils awaiting those who failed to follow church teachings. For this reason, medieval travellers showed far less interest in interacting with non-Christians than in describing their monstrous forms and deviant ways.[2] Hence well into the modern period, many Christocentric narratives relied upon, reiterated, and reaffirmed the medieval fourfold system of ordering humanity, demonstrating poignantly how classification systems shape and are shaped by systems of comparison.

## SOUTH ASIAN CLASSIFICATIONS

Before investigating the classifications found in Christocentric travelogues, a brief examination of pre-British South Asian classifications offers an opportunity to measure the changes British political and cultural hegemony catalyzed over two centuries. Of course, such a review can hardly be considered complete or exhaustive given the vast diversity of subcontinental cultures, the intricate complexities of their societies, the relative paucity of period sources, and the regrettable limitation of space here. However, contemporary sources that both have survived (i.e., texts from political, religious, and economic elites) and refer to both those whom we today might label "Hindu" and "Muslim" express classifications characterized more by context-dependent, political accommodation than rigidly maintained, religious chauvinism that establishes orthodox or orthoprax boundaries, although these too existed.

In terms of Sanskrit sources, no single classificatory system existed. As Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya has demonstrated for the eighth to the fourteenth centuries, those who happened to be Muslims tended to be characterized in three ways. First, they were labeled *least occasionally* as Muslims (*Musalamana*s in Sanskrit). Second, authors described Muslims in terms of spatial and ethnic origins. Finally, some authors used generic, derogatory labels such as *mleccha* and *yadava* to classify them.[3] The twelfth-century chronicle of Kashmir's rulers, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, provides clear examples of the latter two classificatory moves, expressing the flexibility found in the application of particular categories in much of Sanskrit literature. In general, the text describes political opponents

who were Muslim as *turuska* (Turk), using an ethnic identifier without direct reference to what we would describe as their religion. In fact, Kalhana expresses no concern regarding the Turk rulers' practices or beliefs beyond their establishment and patronage of *vihara*s (monastaries) and *caitya*s (sancturaries or stupas). This lack of religious recognition does not derive from an indifference to religious identity in the text. Buddhists, for instance, are identified as such and the king is declared "a devotee of Siva." Overall, Kalhana's use of religious classification derives from his concern for the state's protection of the brahmanically determined dharmic order. For this reason, he criticizes Buddhists as "opponents of the Vedas" who "had cut at the root of the religious rites prescribed in the *Nilapurana*." In the *Rajatarangini*, Turk rulers come in for no such approbation because those whom the text describes fulfill the state's obligation to found and maintain *vihara*s and *caitya*s.[4]

The *Rajatarangini* also deploys the terms *mleccha* and *yavana*, two derogatory generic terms for describing those who eschew their orthoprax duties to the dharmic order. But these terms did not serve as simple synonyms for those who happened to be Muslim. For instance, Kalhana describes both Muslim and non-Muslim groups as *mleccha*,[5] a Sanskrit term conveying a wide range of exclusion including "a foreigner, barbarian, non-Aryan, man of an outcast race, any person who does not speak Sanskrit and does not conform to the usual Hindu institutions."[6] While other Kashmiri chroniclers also broadly applied *mleccha* as a slur,[7] Romila Thapar has identified some nonderogatory uses of the term, which later came to refer to those outside the system of *varnasramadharma* (the ordering of society via four *varna*s).[8] This accords with the patterns of use traced by Chattopadhyaya. Meanwhile, Cynthia Talbot has demonstrated how inscriptions from the Deccan reflect similar shifts between depictions of Turk political elites as depreciated barbarians and lauded rulers.[9] Although Kalhana and other Kashmiri chroniclers generally applied the term *yavana* to those who happened to be Muslim, it remains unclear whether they meant this as a religious or geographic appellation: the term probably originated as a rendering of *Ionia*, referring to Greeks and thereafter often used for all who came from the West.[10]

Persian and Arabic sources written by Muslims in South Asia show as much variance as those penned by Hindus.* States based on Muslim polities often used a rhetoric of difference using Quranic language, but the policies they implemented usually differed significantly. Convergences were forged between categories not in order to ignore differences, but to suggest relationships. For instance, the first Muslim to govern part of the subcontinent—Muhammad ibn al-Qasim, who conquered Sindh in 711–712 CE—created a precedent followed subsequently by most Indo-Muslim rulers when he established Hindus and Buddhists as *dhimmi* (protected people) akin to *ahl al-kitab* ("People of the Book": Jews, Christians, and Sabians, according to the Quran), requiring most to pay the *jizya* tax but preserving them from the consequences of being

* Because the focus here concerns indigenous categories, the views of Arab- and Persian-language authors dwelling outside South Asia will not be considered.

declared disbelievers. He reputedly proclaimed "the temples shall be unto us like the churches of the Christians, the synagogues of the Jews, and the fire temples of the Magians" (a synonym for Zoroastrians). Ibn al-Qasim went so far as to omit Brahmans from the *jizya* he levied on the rest of the country. Other Muslims attempted to connect Brahmans to the prophet Ibrahim, drawing a parallel between Indic fire libations and a Quranic passage associating fire with that prophet.[11] Although some Muslim heads of state in South Asia enforced the *jizya* collection, most from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century did not.[12]

The divergence between rhetoric and practice often pivoted on the relationship of the ruler to the ulama (Islamic scholars). The sultan or emperor may have had ultimate power over his dominion, but he relied on the ulama to Islamically legitimate his rule. This often created a tension between the practical interests of the state and the ideological concerns of the ulama. Hence, the Mughal emperor Akbar (d. 1605) declassified Hindus as *dhimmi* and ended the *jizya* on the pretense that Rajputs had fought for his rule and, thus, could not be expected the pay a tax that, at least nominally, served to compensate for a non-Muslim's nonparticipation in military service.[13] The first few generations of Mughal rule enjoyed such political success in part because non-Muslim officials and officers became integral to the running of the state, thus marrying (literally, sometimes) diverse regions into the Mughal establishment.

However, the ulama and conservative writers often defended certain boundaries of orthoprax propriety. Although Akbar may have pursued his syncretic *din-i ilahi* (divine religion) socioreligious policy to further strengthen the integration of his subjects, upon his death the ulama asserted their authority and forced its termination.[14] Other Muslims privy to rulers attempted to prompt stern differentiation between Muslim and non-Muslim. For instance, Ziauddin Barani (d. 1357), among the most influential political authors during the Delhi Sultanate that preceded Mughal rule, juxtaposed Islam to infidelity and theism to polytheism as part of a cosmic duality established by Allah: one opposite requiring the other to exist.[15] Since members of the ulama in South Asia so fixedly worked out of juridical traditions with strict categorical delineations established in the Arabian context, it has been observed that among those who wrote in the thirteenth century, many made no mention of the majority population surrounding them, constrained as they were by the orthodox categories of Muslim, Jew, Christian, Sabian, and Zoroastrian.[16]

Non-Muslim involvement in the Mughal state did not mean that political authorities no longer recognized religious difference. Clearly, Muslim elites commonly acknowledged distinctions between themselves and Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and other groups. In Smith's terms, the comparison was endemic but the method used to "play across the gap"—that is, the attempts made to relate these categories relative to one another—varied tremendously. Some of these efforts led to deep acrimony such as temple destruction[17] and some to intimate association. Akbar's chronicler Abul Fazl Allami documented the former when he described "the fanatical hatred prevailing between Hindus and Muslims"

that the emperor attempted to address.[18] On the other hand, shared associations made interaction more likely through the mutual identities in the other dimensions of individuals' lives, such as common participation in court life. Thus a Hindu official serving a Muslim ruler might always be recognized as Hindu, but his ability to share in the Islamicate rituals and language of the court created the possibility of relationships unencumbered by religious differentiation.[†]

Significantly, the Mughals originated a policy of "appropriating Hindu religious institutions to serve imperial ends—a process involving complex overlappings of political and religious codes of power," as Richard Eaton has remarked. Thus, the Islamicate rule of the Mughals became a site for the convergence of "Hindu" and "Muslim," not only through the shared court association of officials and officers of different religious identities, but also by not categorically rejecting a Muslim emperor's patronage of a Hindu deity's temple. This would contrast starkly with the evangelical Christian revulsion toward the East India Company's involvement with heathen or Muslim worship. Leaders such as Claudius Buchanan and William Wilberforce would have blanched at the thought that the Company would dispatch a representative to accompany the god Jagannath's chariot at the annual Puri festival as Shah Jahan did.[19] For them, Jagannath represented the depths of Hindu depravity and everything a Christian government should attempt to undo. As a result of evangelical pressure, the British Indian government extricated itself from Mughal precedents regarding patronage of religious sites in order to maintain as great a disassociation as possible between Christian and Hindu.[‡] Hence, the British broke with the long-standing Indic tradition that the state's legitimacy rested in no small part on its ability to support diverse locations of religious worship, which even the Islamicate states they so often described as "jealous" and "intolerant" maintained.

While premodern elites and states occasionally did use religious classifications, what remains unclear is the prevalence and significance of such categories and their relationships on the level of city streets and village fields. Almost certainly, social, economic, and cultic concourse in these contexts often undermined if not entirely overlooked religious divisions. For instance, Sufi sites sometimes provided such contexts as devotees mingled among *pir*s (masters) and their *dargah*s (shrines) with little regard to religious identification. For centuries, the *baraka* (grace) or *shakti* (power) of *dargah*s such as those of Muinuddin Chisti in Ajmer and Usman Shah near Chainpur have served local and distant Hindus,

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† For examples, consider the popular narratives of Akbar's Hindu advisor Birbal, the service of Shivaji's father in the Adil Shah court in Bijapur (Laine 2010, 156–157), and the lives of Ain al-Mulk Gilani and Ahmad Khan in Deccani courts (Wagoner 1999).

‡ Examples of temple desecration and pillaging would appear to undermine this argument. However, as Eaton has exhaustively detailed, such acts represented a continuation of Indic traditions in which conquering armies—including Hindu ones—demolished religious centers representing the sovereignty and power of a defeated dynasty. Aurangzeb, the least tolerant of Mughals, destroyed such temples yet cited sharia both in the protection of existing, non-royal temples in Benares and in a prohibition of new construction. Eaton 2000, 263, 266–268.

Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians as a place of routine devotion and occasional pilgrimage, especially on the annual *urs* celebrations that commemorate a Sufi's death. But, as noted above, co-involvement does not necessarily abrogate categorically made distinctions. For instance, Mirza Janjanan (d. 1781), a Naqshbandi *pir* in Delhi, crafted an association among Hindus and Muslims when he classified Hindus as monotheists instead of idolators. Yet he also maintained levels of distinction between the two groups when he observed that the Islamic revelation had supplanted the Hindu religion.[20]

Outside Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian inscriptions and literature, vernacular sources appear to offer some clear evidence of popular classification schemes based on the binaries of "Hindu" and "Muslim." As I have observed elsewhere, various middle-period authors juxtaposed the religious practices and precepts of "Hindus" to those of "Turks" or "Muslims."[21] For instance, in his *Bijak*, Kabir uses his usual eviscerating observational technique to ask,

> If circumcision makes you a Muslim,
> what do you call your women?
> Since women are called man's other half,
> you might as well be Hindus.
> If putting on the thread makes you Brahmin,
> what does your wife put on?
> That [low caste] Shudra's touching your food, pandit!
> How can you eat it?
> Hindu, Muslim—where did they come from?
> Who started this road?
> Look hard in your heart, send out scouts:
> where is heaven?
> Now you get your way by force,
> but when it's time for dying,
> without Ram's refuge, says Kabir,
> brother, you'll go out crying.[22]

In his effort to provoke audiences toward a *bhakt*'s devotion to Ram-Allah (as he sometimes described his deity), Kabir both agitates against the jealous boundaries between Hindu and Muslim and depreciates the customs used to define them. Moreover, he points out these also perpetuate inequalities inherent within these groups, such as the gender-specific marking of belonging (circumcision, thread-wearing) and the *varna* hierarchy. Presumably, the popularity of Kabir and other antinomial authors of his era relied on a general understanding of the religious categories Hindu and Turk/Muslim as well as a willingness to transcend them.

Of course, the use of "Hindu" as an identification might lead some to conclude that a Hindu religion existed before the British Raj.[23] However, as outlined in chapter 1, "Hindu" does not predicate the existence of "Hinduism." Nor does a premodern use of

terms such as "Hindu"—like "Muslim" and "Turk"—by some South Asians evidence the centrality of these identities in popular definitions of self or of others in this period. The contemporary authors who like Kabir, often use the categories "Hindu" and "Turk"/"Muslim" as part of a religious critique very often appear to do so in reference to elites, their milieu, and their practices: Brahmans, mullahs, swamis, qazis, pandits, systems of metaphysics, reciting the Vedas, reading the Quran.[§] Kabir, in particular, aimed his razor-edged critiques at religious authorities, undoubtedly doing so because they would be among those most involved in the policing of the orthopraxies against which he rebelled. His and others' attacks on certain elites in an effort to undermine rigid rules and distinctions prompts some wariness regarding the popularity of the categories they appear to have been instrumental in promoting. While elites may have sought to promote strictly bounded identities through exclusive and highly marked practices that they portrayed as a system under their authority, as suggested already most Indians may have led devotional and ritual lives that routinely transgressed elite formulations of proper "Hindu" and "Muslim" behavior. In contrast, the key feature of British classifications of South Asia was not just their assumption that communal identities existed, but their presumption that these represented the foundation of the society and the basis of the individual.

Overall, therefore, pre-British South Asian representations of those who happened to be Hindu or Muslim varied significantly. In some contexts, these terms served as mutually exclusive identifications. However, no evidence suggests that South Asians only ever viewed one another through these categories. Rather, various social, ritual, and political classifications often made religious difference an inconsequential issue. As we have seen, Brahman authors commonly expressed more concern for the state's maintenance of the cosmo-political dharmic order than for what rituals heads of state personally practiced or what beliefs they held. Although some ulama sought a constantly stern division between Muslims, *dhimmi*s, and *kafr*s (disbelievers), the inclusion of Hindus as *dhimmi*s without the burden of *jizya* under most states demonstrates how social, economic, and political exigencies often outweighed chauvinism. Left unresolved is the significance of religious classification among the mass of South Asia's population. Evidence suggests, however, a similar pattern as among elites: occasional attention to categories of social division based on religious practice, yet persistent interactions that undermined notions (if there were any) that "Hindu" and "Muslim" represented two mutually exclusive realms of religion, culture, and society.

## CHRISTOCENTRIC TRAVELOGUES

Despite the changes in European perspectives prompted both by the Protestant Reformation and humanism's advent, Christian theology continued as an epistemic order

[§] While a large percentage of South Asian Muslims may have been able to recite the Quran, relatively few could (or can) read it for comprehension.

that informed many European travelogues throughout the period of British Indian rule. While the Reformation further splintered theological divergences in western Christianity, and humanism provided new approaches to ethnography, many nineteenth- and twentieth-century travelogues demonstrated how strongly medieval Christian comparative and classificatory traditions persisted. I describe these travelogues as "Christocentric" since to describe them as "Christian" would suggest that the humanist-informed ethnographies examined in the next chapter are somehow "non-Christian." Given that most contemporary Britons identified as Christian and many adopted a humanist perspective, this would be confusing and create the same misperceptions perpetuated by descriptions of anything associated with Muslims or Hindus as "Islamic" and "Hindu." As we shall see, one can be Christian—just as one can be Hindu or Muslim—without religious ideology dominating one's interpretation of others.

Not all examples of Christocentric travelogues in India were authored by missionaries, though some of the most famous examples were. The missionary world, driven by a greater consciousness regarding theology than that of lay people and hungry for both stories of proselytizing success and information about non-Christians, provided the most exemplary demonstrations of this genre. Although Christian missionaries in South Asia never accounted for a significant percentage of the European population and amounted to a vastly smaller percentage of the Indian population, their accounts significantly influenced the image of the subcontinent around the globe. For example, the letters and journal entries of William Bowley, an early nineteenth-century Anglican missionary working in a somewhat peripheral location that covered Chainpur, were repeatedly reprinted in British and American publications—including Anglican, Baptist, and Presbyterian ones—and were even translated into German for a Swiss publication.[24] Bowley also featured in other Christians' travelogues and autobiographies, undoubtedly attracting the attention of some because of his published reputation. Other travel writers drew on missionary accounts to complement their own observations, as the mid-nineteenth century British soldier R. G. Hobbes noted when he acknowledged the "Journals of the Missionaries": "It is right to add that in depicting the scenes we have visited we unite in one picture observations made at different periods."[25]

Importantly, these accounts, when taken together with information gathered across the globe by transnational missionary networks, allowed for comparison of religious phenomena without regard for geographical distance. For instance, while discussing local opposition to Bowley's mission, the American *Missionary Herald* noted, "Instances of persecution like that here noticed, are not unfrequent among the converts to Christianity. The reader will be reminded, especially of instances which have occurred in Syria" [*sic*].[26] However transnational, these networks sometimes were fractured along confessional lines. For instance, Protestants in India appeared unwilling or unable to use the extensive Jesuit literature that had derived from long-term, linguistically knowledgeable contact, especially in the South.[27]

Missionaries and lay people had a variety of reasons for wanting to publish about non-Christian religions. Primarily, they sought to encourage interest in either funding or joining missionary efforts. For many, the existence of non-Christians served as a sign of Satan's reign and Christianity's necessity.[28] Secondarily, enthusiastic Christians published to influence government policy in India. Charles Grant (d. 1823), Claudius Buchanan (d. 1815), and Bishop Reginald Heber (d. 1826) all wrote their influential works while serving as East India Company (EIC) servants. Grant eventually became an EIC director. Also, Company policy toward issues like sati, hook swinging, and government patronage both derived from and resulted in attention brought by missionaries and Christocentric travel writers.[29] The unrelenting reiteration in Christocentric travelogues of such controversies served to perennially justify Christian expansionism to missionaries, their supporters, and government. Deprecations such as sati, thugee, and the Jagannath car festival (which supposedly crushed devotees by the score) proved popular topics, even long after government had curbed their practice. Finally, Christian publications also served missionary interests in intelligence regarding non-Christian beliefs and behavior in order to better engage and persuade those who held and practiced them. Specifics offered proselytizers an insight into what their opponents thought, allowing missionaries to better formulate arguments more likely to dissuade them of their false beliefs and persuade them of Christianity's revealed truth. As a report on Baptist missions in Bihar declared, this "proves to be a very effectual way of overcoming opposition, and shaking the confidence of the people in their errors."[30] Demonstrating its genetic connection to the eventually emergent discipline of anthropology, Christocentric travelogues often included verbatim accounts of conversations between missionaries and bystanders, showing the effectiveness of their debating techniques. Meanwhile, data about *mela*s (festivals), pilgrimages, and devotional sites provided information that helped determine the best times and places for public preaching. These efforts complemented efforts to translate Hindu and Muslim "scriptures" into vernaculars with the expectation that if their adherents could be challenged to actually *read* them instead of just venerate them or trust those who claimed to know them, erstwhile devotees would recognize their fallaciousness.

The impact of these publications did not remain constrained to missionaries and Indian Christians, since they entered into a cycle of texts circulating among Britons in and out of India. Scholarship on British India has often investigated the impact of missionary representations while overlooking the role of Christian paradigms and commitments among influential British officials and authors, as though the early antipathy of the government to missionary activity established an everlasting disjuncture between Christianity and the state. While Grant, Buchanan, and Heber's names are all familiar in histories on the topic, their positions in government feature less prominently. Meanwhile, the Christian investments of many influential officials, scholars, and other authors could not but influence what they published about Indians. For example, Monier Monier-Williams (d. 1899), Oxford professor and one of the most prominent Sanskrit scholars of his century, concluded his book *Hinduism* (published by the Society for Promoting

Christian Knowledge) with the observation that for the Indian "masses," "Christianity alone is their true home."[31] Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer Sir William Wilson Hunter (d. 1900), who wrote authoritative reference works about north India (see chapter 5), pronounced his "belief that the missionary instinct forms the necessary spiritual complement of the aggressive genius of the English race," which would help in the "expiation of national wrong-doing in the past."[32] Fellow ICS officer and north Indian veteran G. A. Grierson (d. 1941) wrote in a publication of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts a celebration of Christianity even as he pleaded against the pitfalls of Christian triumphalism. "When speaking of Indian religions, let us not always talk of them as blank heathenism to be conquered and beaten down by a victorious army marching under the banner of the Cross. Let us ever remember that in some, at least, of them there are many grains of truth—ay, of *Christian* truth."[33] Beyond scholars and officials who expressed themselves through Christian paradigms, many others contributed to missionary efforts by providing information for specific projects. For instance, the oft-cited volume *Bengal as a Field of Missions* (1854), written by Calcutta judge MacLeod Wylie, depended on information provided by the lieutenant governor, surveyor general, and secretary of the council of education. Overall, Christocentric comparative approaches did not characterize all authors who happened to be Christian (and neither did eagerness for proselytization), but these particular comparative tendencies reinforced the categorical assumptions operative among most Britons.

Because most observers qualified Indians as essentially religious and, then, relied on categories of religion defined by a set of essential, unique features by which to categorize them, their representations focused (if not fixated) on qualities of difference. Unsurprisingly, this led to portrayals of "religions" that imagined them as reified, self-contained entities definitively qualified by traits that their members purportedly shared and that separated them from one another. In other words, efforts to differentiate one group from others often involve the identification of qualities that not only distinguish them, but come to be taken as the group's primary characteristic. For example, efforts to differentiate Hindus from Muslims often overemphasized vegetarianism as a core characteristic, even though most Hindus do not deliberately abstain from meat. This became apparent in the initial British travelogues written in South Asia. No sooner did Ralph Fitch (d. 1611), among the first English merchants in India, make landfall in 1583, than he distinguished between the "Moors and Gentiles"** of the country and contrasted them to Christians. He fixed on the same discriminating features by which other British Christians would differentiate "Gentile" customs in India from their own for four centuries. "They have a very strange order among them, they worship a cow, and esteem much of the cows' dung to paint the walls of their houses. They will kill nothing, not so much as a louse; for they hold it a sin to kill any thing. They eat no flesh, but live on roots, and rice, and milk.

** In keeping with contemporary usage, Fitch uses the term *Gentile* and not *Hindu*. In successive centuries, Anglophones adopted the term *Gentoo* and, finally *Hindu*.

And when the husband dieth, his wife is burned with him, if she be alive; if she will not, her head is shaven, and there is never any account made of her after."[34] Among other notable changes between Fitch's sixteenth-century narrative and the Christocentric travelogues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would be a shift of comparative focus from practice to belief. Since comparison between his and later accounts reflect changes and consistencies among Christocentric accounts, we will make occasional reference to Fitch's journey, in which he transited Shahabad district on his way between Benares and Patna.

This chapter in no way attempts a comprehensive analysis of traveller accounts, and ignores many of the other comparisons these authors made beyond those of religion. For instance, they also contrasted the scenery, architecture, transportation, economy, and settlements between different regions of India and between India and Britain, if not other countries. Both this and the ethnographic (if not ethnological) quality of Bishop Heber's widely read travelogue were apparent when he noted that the inhabitants of Bihar were "not very much darker than the natives of the south of Europe." In comparison, Bengalis "are nearly the colour of a black teapot." Having disregarded clothing and climate as a source for the difference (Bihar having a stronger sun than Bengal), Heber concluded "I cannot help believing that as the language is different, so their race is also, and that in Bengal are some remains of an earlier, perhaps a negro stock, such as are now found in the Andaman islands, but who have been subdued by, and amalgamated with, the same northern conquerors who drove the Pujarrees to their mountains."[35] Demonstrating the seemingly accidental quality of comparison inherent in ethnographic comparison, Heber also showed how his travelogue was influenced by and contributed to developing concepts of language and race set within an evolving historiographic narrative that helped establish a framework for universal comparisons. Notwithstanding these other comparisons, religious difference featured most prominently in the travelogue of Heber and most other Christocentric travellers.

Although this focus on religion in India mirrored concerns in Britain, deliberations there increasingly recognized separate spheres for religious life and secular society. In Britain, as elsewhere in Europe, the state had politically subordinated the national church,[36] contributing to the equation of English citizenship to Anglican membership. So, for instance, all students at the state-supported universities of Oxford and Cambridge needed to demonstrate their allegiance to the Church of England until the 1850s.[37] Meanwhile, an evangelical revival—impelled in part by the Methodist movement of John and Charles Wesley—began to gather in the 1750s that would promote enthusiasm and a Christian commitment to change the world.[38]

Demonstrating that they sought moral change at least as much at home as abroad, evangelicals across denominational lines promoted missions, education, and gospel dissemination locally and internationally. Baptists founded in 1764 a county association in Northamptonshire for domestic work, then established a society in London for preaching in English villages. Only later did Baptists found the Particular Baptist Society for

Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen that dispatched William Carey, lauded as one of the first English missionaries to India. Meanwhile, Anglican Evangelicals successfully built enough momentum to force open India to missionaries (1813), while domestically they successfully ended the English slave trade (1833) and fashioned broad efforts seeking to purge England of vice and immorality.[39] Paternalistic concerns for moral uplift and social change made English employers responsible for their employees[40] and states for their subjects. It was a short jump from this position to the legitimation of empire for the sake of conversion. During the nineteenth century, Britons debated the place of religion in an emerging public sphere standing between the realms of government and "the private," the latter encompassing home and place of religious practice,[41] while the efforts of English Evangelicalists helped project and fashion a singular United Kingdom in a solidifying public realm adjacent to the private.[42] While many Protestants cheered the subordination of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain, the French Revolution was sobering in its secularism and led many to revise their views. The nineteenth century slowly reversed the political subordination of churches mastered by Europeans a century earlier.

Britons argued among themselves whether or not their providential imperial successes imputed a responsibility upon them to bring non-Christians to the true religion, as the secular concerns of some appeared to interfere with the Christian duties of others. Ambivalence abounded. Although the Church of England founded the Church Missionary Society (CMS)—its most effective evangelizing organ in nineteenth-century Africa and Asia—in 1799, the East India Company effectively barred it from India. The Charter Bill of 1813 reversed this, though by this time CMS already had begun training missionaries in Calcutta. Despite this change, the first bishop of Calcutta, responsible for all of British India, did not encourage the society. His successor, Reginald Heber, overturned that policy and rigorously supported the CMS. The society used a three-pronged strategy for propagation of and conversion to their faith: education, printing, and mission stations.[43]

In order to depict the variety in comparative and classificatory strategies among Christocentric travelogues, it helps to differentiate three Christian theological approaches to non-Christians as delineated by historian Geoffrey Oddie: those based on notions of total displacement, those that viewed Christianity as other religions' fulfillment, and those perceiving Christ's presence in all religions. Although Oddie restricts his comments to Protestant missionary views of Hindus, his schema also applies to Christocentric travelogues. Using Jonathan Z. Smith's language, each approach provided a different rubric of comparison based on divergent perspectives regarding the "gap" of difference and the interests informing its manipulation. As we shall see, in most instances these comparative strategies fixed on the religious differences described above. The following analysis, therefore, attempts to portray and analyze some of the dynamics involved in these Christocentric perspectives, not provide a comprehensive account of them. It draws upon the accounts of missionaries, church officials, and laypeople.

In order to describe in some measure these dynamics within and changes to Christocentric ethnographic paradigms, we must rely on accounts written by travellers

who passed through Shahabad district, not just the very few who left records of visiting Chainpur. Despite the importance the village had enjoyed in the reign of Sher Shah Suri (d. 1545) as described in chapter 2, during the Raj it remained on the fringes of interregional transportation systems. Backed against the Kaimur Range, its position at the Gangetic Valley's sidelines gave its residents bleacher seats to observe what happened farther north, but not the access to participate much. Although a somewhat important secondary road had passed adjacent to the village since before British ascendancy, Chainpur did not straddle any of the arterial routes of the Gangetic Valley: the Ganges River, the Grand Trunk Road, or the Grand Chord Railway. Forty kilometers to the north, the meandering Ganges had long offered a seasonal riverine highway for those passing between Calcutta, Benares, and points to the west. Dozens of travellers reported their experiences as the Bihari landscape slid by and when they put ashore at Monghyr, Patna, Buxar, and other towns. During drier months, those moving between official assignments or in search of a profit, an adventure, or the picturesque made use of the Grand Trunk Road (passing 20 kilometers from Chainpur) that had connected Calcutta with most of the important up country cities as far as Kabul since at least the Suri period.

Despite additions to these significant transportation conduits, by the nineteenth century Chainpur remained simultaneously remote and connected. When the government completed the Grand Chord Railway (1864), it ran too far away for easy access by the Chainpur residents who could afford passage, snaking along the Ganges in order to provide rapid transport for the troops quartered in the cantonments Britons had established in Dinapur and Buxar, as well as connect administrative centers like Shahabad's district headquarters at Arrah. However, at the turn of the nineteenth century, a new broad-gauge line ran farther south with a stop at Mohania, only twenty kilometers distant. By then, however, Chainpur had relinquished the role of sub-division headquarters to Bhabua, a town ten kilometers east. Therefore, a direct road linked Bhabua—not Chainpur—to the Mohania station. Overall, then, few Christocentric travellers visited Chainpur, although many left records of their passage through the district.

Meanwhile, western Bihar had little to attract missionaries or the travellers who visited them. Contemporary accounts suggest that throughout most of the Raj, no mission existed closer to Chainpur than the CMS missions in distant Chunar, Benares, and Buxar, while a 1926 list of Christian burial grounds in the district notes none closer than Arrah, Sasaram, and Buxar.[44] Although a few years earlier the Methodist General Conference had established a Bhabua mission not too distant from Chainpur, it was too small to have had much effect (by 1930 it served only forty-two Christian families scattered among eighteen villages).[45] Hence, out of keeping with the rest of the chapters, the following analysis often relies on travellers who passed through Shahabad district, but did not necessarily visit Chainpur. In sum, they offer examples of the three comparative ideologies that informed Christocentric travelogues: radical displacement, Christianity as the fulfillment of other religions, and Christ present in all religions. Simultaneously,

their travelogues further illustrate the dynamics of association, differentialization, and classification inherent in comparative systems.

## *1. "Radical displacement"*

> We pitched our tent close to a place of public resort, by the tomb of the Hindu saint, *Harsu Boirub*, where deluded people come, throughout the year, to present offerings for earthly blessings. This man is said to have been the family priest of an ancient raja, whose house, in consequence of his vying in splendour with his employer, was pulled down by order of his rani. To avenge himself the Brahman sat dhurna (*i.e.*, to obtain redress or starve himself to death on the spot) at his gate, and at the end of twenty-one days died, and because some persons have obtained the desires of their heart after making vows, his tomb is become celebrated for miracles, and fifty families of Brahmans are now supported by sharing in the offerings.[46]

The missionary William Bowley (d. 1843) visited Chainpur in 1842 and left this record of a story still told today about the self-starvation and postmortem vindication of a wronged Brahman turned *brahm* (vengeful Brahman ghost). Although, as we shall see, a parade of Britons and Indians (and, later, Americans) would report this story—indeed, it had already been noted by EIC surveyor Francis Buchanan three decades earlier—Bowley added his own flourish that signified to his audience then and to us today that its meaning resided in a Christocentric paradigm. Whereas archaeologist Alexander Cunningham would describe the worship of this ghost as part of a "universal" Indian phenomenon, folklore collector Khairat Ali would portray its associated myth and ritual in detail, and ethnographer William Crooke would note the *brahm*'s increasing popularity, Bowley the missionary describes the shrine first and foremost as "where deluded people come." While the representations of these others owed far more to humanism and an emerging scientism, Bowley focused on the errancy of the *brahm*'s devotees, seeing them as requiring Christianity to completely displace their Hindu religion.

This notion of "radical displacement," as Oddie describes it, viewed Hindu and Islamic traditions as starkly opposite Christianity. In its most severe expressions, this perspective considered Hinduism as a "citadel of Satan" and Islam as the handmaiden of the Antichrist. Such stark opposition allowed no association between these apparently rival and inherently antagonistic religions. Biblical narratives that portrayed God's condemnation of idolatry particularly served to bolster a complete repudiation of "image-worshiping" Hinduism. In fact, as the eighteenth century progressed, increasing numbers of Christians associated idol worship with the child sacrifices of Molech[47] (e.g., Leviticus 18:21, 20:2–5), despite the lack of evidence of any such outrage among Indians. Such radical juxtapositions appeared to be meant to force the case for the necessary conversion of non-Christians. As American traveller Moncure Daniel Conway observed in 1906, "How many travellers have told me about Eastern and Oriental religions,—

about Catholics, Mormons, Jews, or 'Pagan' systems,—without merely measuring them by their remoteness from or proximity to their own particular beliefs?"[48] Although consequential differences separated various movements within the Church of England, nearly everyone from Evangelicals to Broad Churchmen (who sought to engage all sides of Anglican debate) shared an exclusive vision of salvation through Christianity alone. While Hinduism and Islam stood beyond redemption, individual Hindus and Muslims did not so long as they crossed the bridge provided by conversion, abandoning their false religions for Christianity's salvation.[49] With this hope in his heart, William Bowley entered Chainpur.

Bowley was the first recorded missionary to visit Chainpur. He was born in 1785, a child of a European soldier and Indian mother, and raised in the Lower Orphan School in Kidderpur, a village near Calcutta where the CMS established a missionary training school for native Christians (a goal for much of missionary education).[50] For thirty years after arriving in 1814, Bowley worked out of the fortified town of Chunar just upriver from Benares. Industrious by any measure, he established regular worship services at Chunar, then with CMS support he built schools, almshouses, orphanages, and a church. While under his direction, the Chunar mission provided more CMS readers and catechists to British India's northwest than any other. But Bowley always had in mind direct missionary work among the population in the surrounding region.[51] His reputed maxim was "Unless we go to the heathen, he will not come to us."[52] This meant at least two months annually of itinerating beyond the station, persistently seeking villages previously unvisited. Occasionally, this involved extended travels in western Bihar,[53] even as far as Patna. Bowley particularly sought to proselytize during large *mela*s (festivals), maximizing the opportunity provided by the presence of expansive crowds. When ordained by Reginald Heber during the bishop's visit to Chunar, he became one of the first Indian clergymen in the Anglican Church[54] and one of the perhaps six Protestant missionaries operating north and northwest of Benares. Categorically challenged, Britons alternatively described him as "Country-born," "Native," "Indian," "East Indian," and "Anglo-Indian," while he described himself as a "Native Christian."[55]

Bowley's writings depict the categorical qualities of the radical-displacement model in three ways. First, Bowley relies strictly on the familiar categories of religious identity. "Harsu Boirab" is, first and foremost, Hindu. Throughout his journals and letters, Bowley persistently describes all those he encounters as "Christian," "Jew," "Jaini," "Hindu," or "Musalman" (the exceptions tending to be identified by caste instead, especially Brahmans). As represented in Table 3.1, he viewed these as utterly distinct religious identities, except when he grouped the latter three within the umbrella category "heathens."[††] Hence his incredulity upon arriving in Chunar to discover "as dreary a wilderness as could be with professing Christians at it. There were say a dozen Native Christian women

[††] In some places, Bowley differentiates "Muhammedans" from "heathen," a distinction found among other writers such as Reginald Heber.

TABLE 3.1.
William Bowley's comparison of Indians from a radical displacement view.

**Indians**

| **Christians (+)** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Jews** | | | |
| | | **Heathens (–)** | | |
| | | Musulmans | Hindus | Jainis |

who kept together having a *Mussulman* Moonshee for their teacher, who was also *officiating in Public Worship*."[56] Unable to accept such an instance of this kind of popular, category-blurring behavior evident then among Indians, Bowley immediately dismissed the Muslim, had the women teach themselves, and officiated at worship himself. The seeming inability of local Christians to maintain appropriate orthoprax boundaries made Chunar seem an extreme "wilderness," a condition typified by the absence of civilized, categorical order.

In another instance, Bowley wrote a memoir for Nathaniel Tajkhan, a Muslim-born soldier who, a few years before his conversion to Christianity, had taken to "the tenets of Cuveer" (Kabir), whom Bowley describes as a "Hindu Sectarian." Unable to accept "Cuveerism" as a category straddling Islam and Hinduism—which, given Kabir's views as portrayed above, was an option—Bowley declares it a Hindu sect.[‡‡] However, this leads him into a conundrum: how to square the apparent iconoclasm of this "Hindu" movement with the idolatry that essentially defines Hinduism? In response, the missionary characterizes this and all Hindu sects as generally atheist in contrast with the "gross idolatry" of Hinduism's mainstream.[57] This rhetorical move preserves the categorical integrity of "Hindu" by establishing a subcategory—"sect"—to contain those associated with Hinduism but not conforming to European definitions of it. Bowley was not alone among Christians who struggled to maintain their vision of a coherent Hinduism based on the essential qualities of polytheism and idolatry, yet including such disparate elements as the schools of *darshana* (philosophy).

These struggles demonstrated the impact of missionary experience with communities formerly described simply as "heathen." In contrast with medieval categorization, "heathen" and "Gentile" began to expand with subcategories of specifically named groups until finally this category ruptured into discrete "religions," a process repeated among European accounts from other parts of the globe and comprehensively narrated by Tomoko Masuzawa. For Fitch's sixteenth century Christocentic universe, "Gentile" acted

‡‡ James Long, author of the history of the CMS in Bengal that includes an account of Bowley, echoes this view when he notes that "Kuvir…is equally reverenced by the Hindus and Musalmans," yet communally describes him as "a Hindu Unitarian."

as a remainder category within which non-Christians, non-Jews, and non-Muslims could be placed. But the variety he saw among India's Gentiles clearly interested Fitch (probably out of concern for creating the best strategies for evangelizing), and so he often described them with a detail that he did not give for Moors. Hence, he notes how the Gentiles of Benares worshiped idols while those of Cauché, near the Himalayas, did not.[58] Tellingly, some heathens proved prominent enough in European eyes to be named and subcategorized, such as when Bowley identifies one particular group of heathen as Jainis. This indicated how the fourfold medieval taxonomy had begun to unwind as increasing interest in religious diversity began to "see" a variety that left the heathen/Gentile category increasingly insufficient. In Smith's terms, new interests spawned in the crucible of imperial and missionary encounter had undermined the sufficiency of medieval classifications.

Yet for Bowley, the differences between these categories continued to be determined in comparison with Christianity alone (which will contrast with the moral particularism promoted by humanism seen in the next chapter). These religious identities relate to systems of belief—and note that belief has surpassed the medieval emphasis on practice as the defining feature—judged according to their proximity to Protestant Christian belief. Engaging four Brahmans performing puja one day in an hour-long conversation, Bowley criticizes their propitiation of multiple deities. When they respond that it did not matter whom they worshiped, since like rivers, all eventually reach the ocean, Bowley rejects their metaphor with one of his own: they are like traitorous subjects of a king. For Bowley and many fellow missionaries, there were Christians and there were "Rejectors of the True God."[59] Thus, those believing in the efficacy of their worship at the *brahm*'s "tomb" are necessarily "deluded." Bowley's mention of the dozens of Brahmans living off of the site's largesse implies their self-serving complicity in the propagation of this delusion, a familiar allegation made by Christians as long ago as Fitch who casually wrote that Brahmans "are a kind of crafty people, worse than the Jews."[60] It was also a common Protestant complaint against Catholic priests.

Despite the vast comparative difference Bowley saw between Christians and heathens, he recognizes two points of association. First, he sees a common humanity that admits the possibility of change for the heathen. Perhaps modeling himself closely on Paul the evangelist—a missionary exemplar—he often attempts to win over heathens through debate, letters, and publications. His intention in making the great exertion of his itinerations for which missionaries lauded him was to bring the truth to as many people as possible. Not infrequently he moved by boat along the Ganges, pulling along the bank to address locals. Besides penning the first Hindustani hymnal, a Hindustani translation of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and a "Hindui" (Hindi) version of both books of the Bible,[61] Bowley published the tract "Signs of the True Prophet" in an effort to disabuse Muslims of their misguidance. (Not persuaded, the principal *suddur amin* of Tirhut district fired back with the 201-page *Refutation of Christianity*.[62])

Meanwhile, Bowley's use of the terms "tomb" and "saint" in his description of Chainpur's *brahm* shrine allows a second, weaker point of association between Christians and the heathen. The missionary identifies the site as a "tomb" although, presumably, he knows that tombs for Hindus would be exceptionally rare. At the same time, his description of Harsu as a "saint" appears to be an effort to recognize the high level of respect devotees granted him. In both instances, Bowley uses English terms through which his Anglophone audience could associate site and sanctity with similar phenomena in their own traditions. In contrast, when the missionary refers to *dhurna*, he provides both the Hindi term and an English gloss, since the term is too wholly outside of a Christian frame to homologize. Obviously, these efforts to associate obscure what they hope to describe. No other visitor to Chainpur who recorded the *brahm*'s veneration made the improbable suggestion that he had a tomb or suggested that his devotees considered him a saint. While the Hindi and Urdu term *sant* closely approximates the English *saint*—both these terms suggest a sanctity and devoutness during one's life—no published account attributed these qualities to the former Brahman. Hence, his Indian environment and vernacular skills notwithstanding, Bowley's missionary education so inculcated a Protestant Christian frame of reference that he could not, or would not, understand alternative religious paradigms. Of course, Bowley may have felt particularly disinclined to such sympathetic perspectives due to his liminal, even suspect, position as a Native Christian. To wit, Bishop Heber closely scrutinized for ulterior motives Bowley's and a Muslim convert's requests for ordination as deacons before approving them.[63] Despite his life-long familiarity with north India and local languages, Bowley still interpreted what he experienced through the Christian categories of radical displacement.

In the context of his journal, we must assume that Bowley recorded these details as an act of making comparisons and gathering intelligence (indeed, missionaries often used exactly this word, as evidenced by the Calcutta publication "Christian Intelligencer"). As one missionary digest put it, "Mr. Bowley's Journals may always be read with pleasure and advantage."[64] As comparison, he emphasized the gap between Hindus and Protestant Christians, a gap noted in the service of necessitating and valorizing his work. As intelligence, the report noted features of practice and belief that might be addressed in a missionary's published or oral refutation. Just as Bowley recorded in detail so many of his arguments with Hindus and Muslims, and even Jews and Jains, so as to communicate effective approaches to conversion, so the Chainpur details provided similar data for future missionary activities. Bowley's journal, although never published as a whole, served as a travelogue for his fellow missionaries. Among many others, James Long, author of a history of the CMS, drew continually from the journals of Bowley. It is in this history that James Long repeated the Anglo-Indian's description of his 1842 visit to Chainpur.[§§] Meanwhile, many

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[§§] Indeed, the account, missing from Bowley's journal as microfilmed in the CMS archives, only survives in Long's official history of the CMS in Bengal.

missionary travellers elaborated on visits with Bowley, particularly noting his enthusiastic debates with Brahmans, among others. In doing so, as Peter van der Veer points out, they helped fashion a public space in which "Hindu publics" and "Muslim publics" increasingly gave voice to their identities and concerns while affirming a religious identity for themselves.[65]

The two reminiscences published by C. B. Leupolt (d. 1884), who followed Bowley's proselytizing effort in Chainpur, also reflect the use of a missionary's personal experience as intelligence for future work promoting Christianity's complete displacement of other religions, though in a different ethnographic form. Leupolt, stationed in Benares by the CMS during and after Bowley's tenure at Chunar, collected his information through encounters in the course of evangelizing in the city, its neighboring towns, and its adjoining countryside. Published as they were on either side of the 1857 rebellion (1846 and 1884), his two recollections demonstrate a different format of ethnography, a shift in descriptive focus, and a more rationalist approach than Bowley's. Moreover, his account describing a visit to Chainpur illustrates the providentialism so strongly insinuated in Christocentric travelogues.

While Bowley wrote in a journal format, Leupolt organizes his conclusions into a thematically structured ethnography. He divides the first volume, initially published in 1844 and reissued multiple times thereafter, into two parts: "Condition of the people" and "the means employed for the conversion of the people." The first part begins with a description of Benares before outlining the basic beliefs of Mahometans and Hindoos as well as the "morals of the people." The second volume, perhaps influenced by the rude shock that the 1857 rebellion brought to Britons trusting in seemingly compliant Indians, focuses on the changes that British rule and missionary work have wrought in India. The concentration on belief reiterates the Protestant shift in understanding religion, away from practice and toward belief. Finally, the emphasis on morality reflects the mounting perception of religions as ultimately moral systems, judged according to their fruits. Meanwhile, the shared, initial focus on Benares by both Bowley and Leupolt reflects the strong spatial orientation of the ethnographic mode.

The 1844 volume begins with a spatial comparison that establishes one of the primary themes running throughout this and its companion text: the radical apartness of Christianity from Hinduism and Islam. After offering a discussion of the antiquities of India, Leupolt favorably compares the country to England as bountiful enough, despite its heat, to sustain all humanity, if cultivated properly. Yet, he hastens to add,

> Although God has supplied India with all that man can desire, the native inhabitants are not thankful for those gifts. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib"; but India does not know, and the inhabitants thereof do not consider. "Every prospect pleases, and only man is vile."
>
> "In vain with lavish kindness
> The gifts of God are strewn,

> The Heathen in his blindness,
> Bows down to wood and stone!"[66]

The latter verse derives from a hymn composed by Reginald Heber in 1819, before his arrival in India as Anglican bishop of Calcutta. Blindness and its attendant darkness characterize all non-Christian Indians in Leupolt's mind. In fact, he explains the etymology of *Hindostan* as a name "derived from the two Persian words, *Hind,* 'black,' and *stan,* 'place,' and means literally *the place of the Blacks, or Hindoos*."[67] Hindus, therefore, are black physically and religiously. The situation of "Niggerland"—as the traveller R. G. Hobbes would later translate the name—culminates in Benares: "It was a place of terror to the people—a moral wilderness, where Satan, who has his throne at Benares, and his most zealous agents, went to and fro."[68] Leupolt's appraisal did not change in the four decades after the publication of his first volume. While addressing critics of evangelists, the missionary noted, "The occurrences of the years 1857, 1858, will free the missionary in future from the charge 'of endeavouring to blacken the character of the gentle Hindu and the faithful Mohammedan.'"[69] Apparently, they had both blackened themselves. In his second set of recollections, Leupolt explained Benares's significance for missionaries as "one of the first in importance; for Benares is the heart of Hinduism, and, if that be pierced, Hinduism receives its death-blow."[70] All Indians required conversion to obtain the most rudimental morality, as he often explained to Indians "the necessity of their becoming Christians in order to become truthful and honest."[71] Both volumes hammer home the message that, for the sake of India, Hinduism and Islam must be displaced by Christianity.

Despite their shared debasement, Hindus and Muslims differ for Leupolt, who endeavors to describe their separate beliefs, morality, and practices. He reserves "heathen" for Hindus, but this does not necessarily mean a higher degree of regard for Muslims. Indeed, the reverse is true, at least in his first memoir. "Although the Hindoos are still further from the truth than the Mahometans, they are not greater enemies to it; and there is, humanly speaking, more hope for them."[72] This theme of the arrogance of Muslims outweighing the ignorance of Hindus is an old one and reflects an enduring impression of Muslims knowing the truth but denying it. Although Leupolt reports as many Muslim converts as Hindu, this was an unusual claim among missionaries commonly frustrated by the "arrogant" Muslim. This charge often reflected a Christian exasperation that many Muslims knew of Jesus through the Quran and popular traditions but steadfastly refused his divinity. Christians often focused their greatest invective on those whose beliefs were most similar to their own, such as Jews. Yet, the less damning appraisal of Hinduism (a term he does not use in 1844 but does in 1884) shifts in his later work, where Leupolt describes a change wrought by God in India: the transition from the dark night of Hinduism, to the moon-lit night of Islam, to the daybreak of Christianity.

With this metaphor, explored further below, Leupolt demonstrates his faith in the sublime power of providence, a key feature of many Christocentric travelogues. The role

of God's hand in guiding the traveller through this benighted land proves itself to Leupolt during his visit to Chainpur in 1868. Traveling with his wife and daughter as part of his evangelical itinerations, Leupolt witnesses their seemingly miraculous escape after their carriage plummets four meters into the river immediately before Chainpur. Signs among his daughter's canary pets and a bazaar dog demonstrate providence's hand in the incident, as does the sudden receptivity to the Gospel of the area's residents who previously had forbade visiting catechists "to speak a single word from Christ." Leupolt's perception of the event demonstrates both his providentialism and his belief that all Indians perceived, as part of their human nature, the truth about God although their religions misled their understanding. And so Muslims determine his family must be saints under Allah's special protection, while Hindus decide they must have gained special merit in a previous life. All of this means that he and his family remain in Chainpur for three days during which his catechists purportedly find attentive audiences everywhere.[73] This record reflects a variety of ways in which Leupolt continued and diverged from the Christocentric perspectives of his predecessors.

Despite the inherently dark quality of Hinduism and Islam, Leupolt understands a fundamental rationale to undergird them. The inadequacies among Hindus and Muslims notwithstanding, Leupolt—like Bowley—believes he can understand their beliefs well enough to argue against them from *within* their paradigm. That is to say, Leupolt recognizes an inherent rationale in what he perceives as Hindu and Muslim beliefs and, in doing so, grants a shared faculty of reason by which he can debate non-Christians and hope to persuade them of their faults. For instance, immediately following his qualification of Hindus as lacking an adequate notion of sin, holiness, heaven, or hell, and his flat declaration "They do not know God," the missionary makes a startling leap of empathetic reasoning: "Read to them John iii. without careful explanation of what Christ means, and the Hindu will say, 'I wonder Nicodemus did not understand that he must be born again; of course we must be born again and again, till we have obtained absorption.'"[74] Although he cannot agree with it, Leupolt attempts to understand a Hindu interpretative logic, so far as he knows it. He considers his grasp of this as a requirement for a deliberate, comparative pedagogy in which the missionary matches the subject's ideas to his own through shared concepts (e.g., sin, holiness, heaven, hell, God) before inflecting his lesson with a Christian angle. So, for instance, Leupolt often asks villagers to explain their hope of salvation and the grounds for this hope in order to reveal and engage their reasoning. Ultimately according to Leupolt, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians share a common nature. "Man's conscience, his spiritual wants which he feels, bear witness to his need of a Saviour."[75] But this should not be construed as any blurring of boundaries between the various religions. For Leupolt as for Bowley, no middle position exists. When considering the Brahmo Samaj, Leupolt first suggests this Hindu reform movement as "a place halting between Hinduism and Christianity" before abruptly condemning such a possibility by declaring "let no one suppose that the reformers . . . are nearer Christianity." In fact, "they are further away than the Mohammedans."[76]

Ironically, another source for this respect for indigenous rationality might have been the reciprocal effort by some Hindus and Muslims to engage Europeans by adapting terms and argumentation in ways Westerners could understand. Indians embracing Western education materials and systems accelerated as British- and Indian-founded schools multiplied in the nineteenth century. The Deb and Tagore families of wealthy Bengalis established Calcutta's Hindu College in 1816, which merged, through Company patronage, with Sanskrit College in 1823. Such institutions contributed to the creation of a shared discursive sphere among some Indians and Europeans. Newly introduced curricula may have helped prompt the reforms of people like Rammohun Roy, who founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1828.[77] But, clearly, exposure to British-introduced education also aided committed Hindus and Muslims to better debate European Christians. While Bowley notes the lengthy refutation of Christianity penned by the principal *suddur amin* of Tirhut, Leupolt observes that Muslim refutations of missionary arguments have changed between 1844 and 1884. The later ones appear to mirror Christian discursive strategies, with references to Jesus's miracles, the use of bazaar preachers, and the publication of attacks on the other religion. Leupolt hints at a connection between this change in critique strategy and increased Muslim acceptance of English education.[78]

Hindus and Muslims not only used European-introduced education to better address Christians in their own terms, but also the missionaries' own materials. Indeed, the very Hindi and Urdu biblical translations that Leupolt, Bowley, and missionaries like them relied upon to proselytize Indians may have been used by some of their audiences to become more familiar with Christian paradigms in order to more effectively disagree with them. When Leupolt recollects a pandit's argument about the meaning of the *Mahabharat*, he notes that his interlocutor describes the Sanskrit epic as a fight "between the good and the bad, or between virtue and vice."[79] Possibly the pandit fashioned his didactic response to fit the missionary's dualistic Christian idiom. The changed nature of the debates with Indians demonstrated a changing ability to defend, and define, themselves in public debate. By the late nineteenth century, Indians would show an increasing identification with an Indian nation in that debate.

By the end of the Victorian era, the teleology of providence no longer just manifested itself in Christian conversions, as Britons in Fitch's day may have anticipated. As a result of the ascendant ideologies and structures of capitalism and nationalism, the pilgrim's progress merged with the nation's progress. And so, in Jonathan Z. Smith's terms, Britons increasingly used ethnography not only to compare true and false religions, but to elaborate a new hierarchy of comparison, what we would call today the developmental divide. The travelogue of R. G. Hobbes demonstrates how, despite its medieval roots, theological comparison of the religious and religions could become imbricated with an economic and epistemic comparison of nations that as fiercely promoted radical displacement.

Hobbes served not as a missionary but as a young private in the Bengal Army and, later, as clerk on the staff of the lieutenant governor of the North-Western Provinces. He viewed and described what else he saw of India while on the march, passing near Chainpur while laboring through river sands and along dirt roads, which he described in his *Reminiscences of Seventy Years' Life, Travel, and Adventure; Military and Civil; Scientific and Literary: Soldiering in India* (1893). Although not a missionary, Hobbes's perspective shared much of the providentialism of Fitch, Bowley, and Leupolt. Indeed, the history of British India made clear that, in his words, "By a wonderful chain of events this great estate has been given to us."[80] Providence, like gravity, worked so pervasively and immutably as a force that its agency did not need to be named. Hobbes declares that all Britons in India share a duty to make it a Christian nation, releasing it from superstition. But—and in this he departs from many of his predecessors—they also must work "to give us a larger acquaintance with the capabilities of India, help to develop those capabilities, to rid the land of its plagues, and to extend the blessings of knowledge and of commerce."[81] For Hobbes, India had a national teleology: a developmental arc of not only religious, but also informational and commercial improvement. Whereas the medieval providentialism anticipated a gradual conversion of the world to Christianity, or at least the arrival of a final judgment in favor of Christians, Hobbes's version implies a duty born of God-given dominance that involves an attendant social uplift.

Hobbes views his own work as fulfilling part of that duty. Not only does he see his book as contributing to the overall information available to his fellow citizens, he also crafts it within the framework of the knowledge matrix C. A. Bayly has described. Demonstrating the vast expansion in the availability of information resources, Hobbes refers on practically each page to a lecture or publication by an authority regarding topics as diverse as linguistics, history, religion, ornithology, and herpetology. Citing statistics, the author suggests that the efforts of men from William Jones to Monier Monier-Williams to add to the stock of knowledge about India and contribute to its development contrast sadly with the supposed aversion of Indians to change.

The country may be "an epitome of the world" in the marvels of its environment, possess a wonderful antique literature, and have peerless pre-British architecture, but it remains stricken by the evils of underdevelopment: filth, contagion, famine, limited science, and lackluster trade. These demerits exist alongside the conditions of ignorance and superstition that chain Indians, especially Hindus. Indeed, the inexorable stagnancy of Hinduism relegates the exertions of Hindu reformers to failure.[82] The fact that India remains so strongly Hindu means that it must still be in need of change. His answer to this situation demonstrates how Hobbes's frame of reference may be more expansive than many of his predecessors, but its orientation still remains solidly defined by Christianity. When he asks the rhetorical question, "Have we, to whom the land and the people have been given, done anything to amend these evils?" his answer is threefold. First, the British have saved lives through sanitation and wild animal control. Second, they have developed

the natural wealth through schools, infrastructure like railroads, and British capital. Finally, "we have given India Missionaries to teach her the pure and holy Faith which has been the basis of our national greatness." Hobbes's audience would have readily understood this theme, the famous missionary-explorer David Livingstone having already made the link between Christianity, commerce, and civilization in the context of Africa.[83]

The key to all change, for Hobbes, is information. The former soldier approvingly quotes the missionary Alexander Duff, who confidently declared, "Every branch of sound general knowledge which you inculcate becomes the destroyer of some corresponding part in the Hindoo system."[84] This is so because, in Hobbes's words, Hindu geography is childish and Hindu chronology fabulous: they offer no relative benefit for the time they take to learn.[85] The faith of Muslims, meanwhile, may have favorably influenced humanity through mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, and the arts, but by itself it is incapable of adaptation or change. This leaves it forever determined to destroy all idolaters and impose itself on all non-believers. Hobbes concurs with the minister Krisna Mohan Banerjea (a Bengali Brahman converted by Duff) that European education and science will entirely erode the basis of Hinduism while adding—wishfully and without evidence—that Islam is decaying too. Similarly, Leupolt had commented that old-school Hindus could do nothing to impede intellectual improvement and the unstoppable progress of enlightenment inculcated by European learning.[86] Ironically, advances by Lyell and Darwin in European geology and biology had already led many Western observers to make the same conclusion about Christianity. As we shall see in the next chapter, this would readjust the teleology of progress so that its apex was no longer Christian truth but a nontheistic scientific truth, the category of "pagan"/"idolater" giving way to that of "primitive"/"savage" and the teleology of salvation history increasingly supplanted by a teleology of economic development.

One obstacle in the way to unity, according to Hobbes and many others, was Indian disunity, particularly in terms of religion. Significantly, Hobbes, like Leupolt before him, records several practices that Hindus and Muslims shared, such as Holi celebrations and Muharram commemorations. However, he notes that they "in general so hate each other,"[87] suggesting that communalism obstructed national development—a common premise in twentieth-century British arguments against self-rule.

Christians, however, had their own battle regarding allegations of being a house divided against itself. This fouled the efforts of many to present a picture of Christianity triumphant and a church united. While Christocentric authors often referred with a literary shake of their heads to the Shia-Sunni division among Muslims and to the seemingly endless sectarianism among Hindus, the nettlesome presence of European and Indian Catholics meant that Protestant authors had to reckon with the uncomfortable truth of divergence among Christians as well. Sensing how many Indians derided them for exactly this divisiveness, many Britons stridently differentiated Christian denominationalism from Hindu and

Muslim fragmentations.[88] An American Unitarian minister noted how this weighed on Indian perceptions: "It sets the Hindu and Mohammedan to saying: 'Here is a religion that comes to us pleading love; yet its sects hate each other.'"[89] Similarly, Hobbes deplored the situation rehearsed every Sunday when "such of the soldiers as have not gone to church have been marched to the Roman Catholic or Dissenting chapel, whichever it may be, according to the denomination to which they respectively belong, thus presenting to the natives the spectacle of a sectarian—a *divided*—Christianity."[90] For many Protestant Christians, therefore, Catholicism (alternatively described as Popery or Papism) represented a deficient if not decadent Christianity, the members of which needed conversion.

The British Protestant critique of Hindus undoubtedly drew significantly from a distaste for Catholicism sharpened through a set of confrontations with Catholics at home. Nineteenth-century British accounts often described Hindus in Catholic terms. The same priestly guile, ritual slavishness, idol worship, and sensual materialism appeared to afflict Hindus as they supposedly did Catholics. But many of these sentiments derived from the luggage Britons brought from their island home. First, their tenacious French rivals were overwhelmingly Catholic until, at least, the revolution there. Second, England's Irish Catholic subjects repeatedly rebelled. Finally, England wrestled with the place of its own Catholic minority that would culminate in their legal emancipation in 1829. Meanwhile, Catholic missionaries vied with Protestants in certain Indian locales. A 1931 report declared that Catholics had converted a number of Methodists in Tirhoot district while also operating in other Bihar regions.[91] We will take up this argument of the Protestant reading of Hindus through a Catholic-inflected lens in the next chapter so as to bear out the point that such comparisons were not restricted to the most-religious-minded Britons. Overall, the Catholic question reflects the double standard by which many Christocentric authors dealt with divisions among religions: portraying Christianity as united when entirely cognizant of a different reality on the ground. All of this became particularly poignant in light of the strident views of missionaries—among others—who promoted the radical displacement model of religious comparison

### 2. *Christianity as the fulfillment of other religions*

Although most of C. B. Leupolt's writing promoted the radical-displacement model of Christian relations with non-Christians, some of his views hinted at another model in which Christianity served not as the truth-endowed alternative to all other religions, but as their fulfillment. The missionary expressed this when he approvingly quoted Christian Triloke, a senior catechist, regarding the country's condition.

> Hindustan was a place of darkness in former years. Let me compare it to a dark night. There were stars visible. These stars were parts of the Vedas, and the sayings of Rishis (saints), and Faqirs (ascetics).

> Upon this darkness the moon arose—the crescent (Mohemmedanism). She gave more light than the stars, yet it was not her own, but a borrowed light. Although the light was thus increased, she could not warm the earth, or make it fruitful. But when the state of Hindustan appeared hopeless, a new streak of light appeared. It became brighter and brighter, and the sun arose—the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings. The stars disappeared, the moon vanished before its splendour, and, with increased light, there was also heat communicated, and, with the heat, life and joy. The Sun is the Lord Jesus Christ.[92]

Leupolt demonstrated that he more than just approved of Triloke's sentiment when he concluded elsewhere in his reminiscence that "[t]he great moral lesson taught in the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat* is no doubt a true one—that this world, with all its riches, pleasures, and glory, cannot satisfy an immortal spirit. Ram, Sita, Lakshman, and the Pandus, with Draupati, needed something more; they needed Christ to make them happy."[93] Hence, while he remained committed to the need to displace rival religions, Leupolt also expressed some qualities of the second mode of theological comparison that Geoffrey Oddie describes. Although this model would not undermine notions regarding the extreme distinctions between Hindu, Muslim, and Christian religions characteristic of the radical-displacement model, it would suggest a critical association that allowed for some measure of continuity: the common awareness of (a presumably singular) God.

The journals of Reginald Heber, Anglican bishop of Calcutta, register this change while also reflecting continuities with Christocentric travel. Heber's work—a series of letters written to his wife that she published after his death—became one of the most widely cited Anglophone travelogues from British India. In it, he describes his passage to India and journey in 1824–1825 from Calcutta to Bombay—passing through Bihar while afloat upon the Ganges—then through the southern provinces under British rule and to Ceylon. Like many of his medieval predecessors, Heber does not travel for its own sake, or even *his* own sake, but in service to God. While describing British efforts to measure the Himalayas, he ruminates on how he would like to visit them again but dismisses such an indulgence: "But my journeys never can or ought to be mere tours of pleasure, and the erection of a new Church, the location of a new Chaplain, [*sic*] and twenty other similar matters, may compel me to a course extremely contrary to what I could desire if I were master of my own time."[94] Like medieval crusaders, missionaries, and pilgrims, Heber circumscribes himself entirely by his relationship to the church. However, the bishop at times breaks from conventional wisdom about Indian religions, informed by his engagement with people and places he encounters on his journey. Not infrequently, Heber notes how his observations do not square with what his compatriots in Europe and Calcutta have said, usually in a less favorable light than his own experiences suggest. For instance, when describing Hindu austerities such as hopping on one foot and never lowering the arms, he confesses that these spectacles are not as frequent as reports he had heard in Britain had led him to anticipate.[95] Similarly, while

describing a "very solemn and striking" serai, he pointedly declares that it gives "the lie to the notion common in England, which regards all eastern architecture as in bad taste and 'barbarous.'"[96] Meanwhile, Heber exercises a nuanced discernment that complicates the more simplistic, religiously reductive portraits made by most other period authors. He differentiates, for example, between religious and political motivations among Muslims, concluding that the latter alone are responsible for contemporary antipathy to British rule.[97]

Heber's approach to the Muslims and Hindus he encounters most distinguishes his journal from Christocentric travelogues of the radical-displacement model. Superficially, the bishop applauds aspects of other religions that approximate Christian qualities. So, reflecting his personal faith in providence, he approvingly notes that the Muslim proclamation *inshallah* ("God willing") approximates St. James' maxim "if the Lord will, we shall live and do this and that."[98] However, although he reiterates the medieval categories—making them central to his description and suggesting Hindu and Muslim mutual antagonism (for instance, he often juxtaposes "Mussulman" rule with that of presumptively Hindu rajas)—Heber recognizes the nonuniformity of those categories and a possible affinity between them. The potential commonality among some Christians, Muslims, and Hindus is enabled by certain beliefs and practices that allow devotees to encounter God. For instance, upon hearing the crew of his boat cry "Allah ul Allah" as they begin their voyage upriver along the Ganges, Heber notes,

> I cannot help admiring in the Mussulmans the manner in which their religion apparently mixes itself with every action in their lives, and though it is but too true that all this has a tendency to degenerate into mere form or cant, or even profanation of holy things, for the constant use of God's name in the manner in which some of them use it, scarcely differs from swearing, it might be well if Christians learned from them to keep their faith and hope more continually in their minds, and more frequently on their lips, than the greater number of them do.[99]

Therefore, Heber not only approves of certain facets of Muslim practice (even while recognizing their degenerative tendency), he believes Christians can learn from Muslims. The perceived regularity and constancy of Islamic prayers impresses him, as it did many Britons despite a general Protestant suspicion that such external supplications lacked devout intentionality. At one point, Heber deems the need to temper the temptation to overly valorize Muslim prayer. While describing a group of Muslims outside Benares at evening *namaz* (prayers) as "all as usual, decent, devout, and earnest," the bishop bridles at his companion's lament, shared among some Britons, that Christian devotions were not similarly so. He counters that this is only a matter of perception common among outsiders while viewing unfamiliar ceremonies and likely shared by the Hindus and Muslims observing Christian services.[100] This unusual act of empathetic (if defensive) reflection

hints at how Heber more than appreciates some non-Christian religious practices. Rather, he also acknowledges the possibility of shared experiences among individuals from diverse religions, a possibility that would elide some of the starkest contrasts between religious categories found in the radical-displacement model that had made non-Christians so alien to Christians.

Overall, Heber leaves a reader with the impression that nothing essential about Hindus and Muslims differentiates them from Christians, only the influence of their religious beliefs. The bishop's visit to William Bowley's mission center at Chunar, near Benares, particularly demonstrates this. While touring the formidable fort overlooking the Ganges there, Heber notices that some soldiers walking with him prostrate themselves and kiss the ground before an aniconic, plain black slab. The British commandant of the station explains that Hindus believe "the Almighty" to preside in the place nine hours a day, spending the other three hours in nearby Benares. Despite his limited sympathy for Hindu beliefs and practices, the bishop admits feeling "some little emotion in standing on this mimic mount Calasay [Kailash]. I was struck with the absence of idols, and with the feeling of propriety which made even a Hindoo reject external symbols in the supposed actual presence of the deity, and I prayed inwardly that God would always preserve in my mind, and in his own good time instruct these poor people, in what manner, and how truly he is indeed present both here and every where."[101] Significantly, Heber allows for the possibility between a Hindu and Christian of a shared "feeling" for God. A limit exists, allowing for this possibility only when the Hindu rejects what other Hindus commonly practice (i.e., idolatry) and moves toward a perspective consistent with Protestant Christian practice (hence he prays that he and they keep this lesson *in mind*). Any Hindu understanding must necessarily be deficient wherever it is not entirely congruent with Christian theology. Not accidently, this is particularly so in terms of idolatry, the initial quality used to differentiate between religions in the medieval schema, and for many modern Christocentric authors too. Recall that Heber penned the hymn evoking "the heathen in his blindness"—albeit in 1819, before arriving in India.[102] Given these earlier sentiments, Heber's ethnographic experience in India may be responsible for opening him to the possibility of shared godly experience.

Although Heber could find few commendable qualities in the religion of Hindus, he envisions Hindus as individuals not essentially defined by their religion but, rather, responding to it. While deliberating on the persistence of sati in one Bihar district, he reflects on "the natural disposition of the Hindoo," describing them as "constitutionally kind-hearted, industrious, sober and peaceable, at the same time that they show themselves, on proper occasions, a manly and courageous people." The bishop concludes, "All that is bad about them appears to arise either from the defective motives which their religion supplies, or the wicked actions which it records of their gods, or encourages in their own practice."[103] In Benares—a city that drove many British travellers to the extremes of disparaging prose—Heber struggles again with the preconceptions passed by his fellow expatriates and finds attractive, repulsive, and laudable Hindu religious expressions.

Heber applauds the generosity of some of the city's Hindus, the experience of which contributes to his steadily improving impression of them. He concludes, "'God,' I yet hope and believe, in the midst of the awful and besotted darkness which surrounds me, and of which, as well as its miserable consequences, I am now more sensible than ever, 'God may have much people in this city!'"[104] With his reference to Acts 18.10 in the last line, the bishop conflates his experience with that of the biblical evangelist Paul to whom God directs these supportive words in the face of a hostile reception in the Greek city of Corinth. In other words, Heber views some Hindus in this benighted place as capable of serving the true god by helping him, just as a non-Christian served God by rescuing Paul in that foreign city.

This is not to say that Heber did not wish for India's conversion. While he prefers that Indians ultimately become Christians, the bishop seeks that "the light should break on them by degrees" and without government involvement. During a visit to Benares's mission school, he blanches upon realizing that the education might leave some students either portraying themselves as Christians in school and Hindu at home or with the impression that "Christianity was best for us, but that idolatry was necessary and commendable in persons of their own nation."[105] However, school officials assure him that the students are not allowed to convert without their parents' support or until they become adults. Elsewhere, Heber declares that he would forbid street preaching and expresses concern for how the perception of forced religion could destabilize British rule, which he describes as "English" (not "Christian") in contrast with the "Mahommedan" state that it displaced. Nevertheless, he welcomes Bowley's success among those converted from "Hindooism, Mohammedanism, or Popery," while appearing to prefer conversion through example.[106] In contrast, Leupolt preferred a more aggressive assertion of Christianity. He complained that the government educated young men using Greek, Roman, and English classics "*but they leave the heart empty and void. Heavenly wisdom is carefully excluded from these Schools*." Quite the inverse of Heber, he believed that without instilling the lessons of "the Commandments" such as "Honour the King" and "Obey authorities," the government laid the seeds of its own destruction in youth who would become "vipers."[107]

Whereas many proponents of the radical-displacement model emphasized the obliteration of Hinduism and Islam, and on the rapid growth of Christianity, Heber and others implicitly following the fulfillment model focused on influencing individuals in what they viewed as a fluid situation of variable perspectives and experiences. This alternative view became more popular as the nineteenth century passed its midpoint since missionaries, stymied by earlier hard-line approaches, took more sympathetic views that relied less on the labels "pagan," "heathen," and "idolater,"[108] although these did not entirely fall out of favor. So, for example, in her 1884 travel account, the Indian-born Anna Harriette Leonowens wondered how educated Brahmans who had been exposed to Christianity and science could bow "down to idols of wood and stone" (echoing a line from Heber's in/famous hymn). Nevertheless, she concludes, "Surely, the more earnest and spiritual of

these lowly worshippers see something of the truth, beauty, and goodness of God, denied to less ardent natures, and only discernible with closed eyes and in moments of deep, silent emotion."[109] Echoing Heber, Leonowens suggests some Hindus can access God through internal and experiential means, notwithstanding their idolatrous prostrations. Many writers of similar sentiment recalled Saint Paul the evangelist's encounter in Athens—a city "full of idols"—in which he declared that his was the "unknown god" whom they worshiped at an altar labeled thus (Acts 17:16–23). Leonowens demonstrated how the fulfillment model did not necessarily prompt sincere regard for non-Christian religions. In general, then, the categories and their hierarchy implied in the fulfillment model remain the same as in the total-exclusion model, but the relationship between the categories can be closer and the value gradient of the hierarchy less pronounced due to the possibility of shared, divine experience among their members.

### 3. *"One Christ and many religions"*

The final model that Oddie proposes regarding Christocentric views of the relation of religions has the potential to collapse the hierarchy among religions. Christianity no longer tops the bill because Christ manifests himself in all religions. The categories of separate religions remain, but they are all mutually associated through the universal involvement of Christ. If the previous model allowed for the disaggregation of a religion into individuals who might have more or less genuine experiences of God, then this model denied Christianity's exclusive claim to Christ. That is to say, proponents of this view declared that Christ should not be equated with any one religion because all religions were incomplete in their relation with Christ. Hence, Christianity had no monopoly on Christ's truth and could learn from other religions, and vice versa. Such perspectives in British India were rare, and so we will restrict ourselves to one example that serves as a final possibility in the dynamics of Christocentric classification.[110]

James Martin Peebles announced his challenge to the medieval classification system in his travelogue's title, *Around the World: Or, Travels in Polynesia, China, India, Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Other "Heathen" Countries* (1875). As a self-proclaimed "Spiritualist," this American harbored strong suspicions about "churchal Christianity," concluding, for example, that "[w]herever a purse-proud Christianity has gained the most power, it had most obstructed the march of civilization." He described it as "orthodox Christianity" that, "with its fanaticism, superstition, and cramping creeds, is rapidly sinking, in enlightened countries, into hopeless decrepitude and decay."[111] Peebles championed figures such as Shaker pioneer Ann Lee, Quaker leader George Fox, Deist Benjamin Franklin, and President Abraham Lincoln as Christians living their faith beyond sectarian institutions and their dictates. He viewed Jesus Christ as the exemplary Spiritualist and repeatedly referred to "the Christ-spirit" throughout his travelogue, which he appeared to have written, in part, with the intention of demonstrating the presence of this particular spirit throughout the dubiously termed "heathen" world. This book (one among many he

authored) went through at least four editions and also was rewritten to include material from subsequent voyages under the titles *Three Voyages Around the World* (1898) and *Five Voyages around the World* (1910). Religion dominates his work, with critical and laudatory appraisals of the various traditions he encounters, whether Hindu, Muslim, or Christian.

For Peebles, true Christianity is "the Christ-principles enunciated by Jesus Christ"—yet another formulation of religion as intellectual product. With no affinity to a singular church legitimated by historical tradition, he more comfortably embraces the denominational nature of Christianity than our earlier authors did while, simultaneously, he disaggregates the "heathen" category into "world religions." His list of these (see Table 3.2)—with a population count for each—includes Fetichism, or Sabaism; the religion of Zoraster and Confucius; Brahmanism, the original faith of India; Buddhism, the reformed faith; Mohammedanism; Judaism; the Greek Church; the Roman Church; and the sects of Protestantism. He recognizes the Jaina religion as well. Peebles seeks not only to describe the universal influence of the Christ-spirit, but also to undermine Christian institutional claims to superiority. Hence, for example, he concludes that Roman Catholicism plagiarized the practices of burning incense, hearing confession, wearing gowns, chanting melodiously, and inhabiting monasteries. Meanwhile, the traveller recognizes in other religions the same gradations of truth as he finds in Christianity. Discussing Aryan sacrifices in India, for instance, he differentiates between their underlying truth expressed in "higher planes of thought" and "the lower, superstitious stratum of life," while also finding comparison with ancient Jewish sacrifice. Peebles similarly distinguishes the pre-Vedic rishis' role as seers and prophets from their later self-degrading role as priests that led to their organization of the Brahman caste and, subsequently, the religion of Brahmanism.[112]

The old measure of depravity, idolatry, remains. But this traveller uses a comparative method that defies its role as the essence of the categorically heathen religions and, instead, finds instances in many religions. Unsurprisingly, the issue arises in his discussion of Brahmanism, but he equates Hindus who worship images with Protestants who worship the Bible and Catholics who worship images and the Virgin Mary.[113] Nevertheless, whether deliberating on degraded popular religiosity or the high-minded theism he prefers, Peebles appears as deeply invested in the notion of mutually exclusive classification as any other writer considered. This is evident in the self-contradicting observation he makes in the context of idolatry and iconoclasm in India that "[t]here is a deep, silent hatred existing between the Hindoos and Mohammedans, and yet they peaceably worship side by side."[114] Without explicit recourse to anecdote or observation, this description apparently relies on the many published accounts and scholarship on Indian religions to which Peeble refers throughout his travelogue.

Overall, therefore, Peebles flattened the hierarchical preferences in mainstream Christian classifications. He admitted to the superiority of no religion over the other and used his idiosyncratic concepts of "Christ-spirit" and "Christianity" to posit a commonality that

Table 3.2.

James Martin Peebles's comparison of religions, showing the universal involvement of Christ.

| Religions (a partial list) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Catholicism (+) | Protestantism | Judaism | Mohammedanism | Brahmanism | Buddhism (+) |

infused the loftier parts of each religion but excludes the rest. Hence, he explained, "There were Christians in those pre-historic periods, Christians in golden ages past, Christians long before the Old Testament patriarchs traversed the plains of Shinar, and Christians who spoke the ancient and mellifluous Sanscrit."[115] In his travelogue, Peebles sought to demonstrate that the presence of the Christ-spirit superseded specific religions. In doing so, he offered one of the few ethnographic examples of Oddie's third model of Protestant engagement with non-Christian religions.

## Conclusion

Even as the paradigm of empirical science transformed European views of the natural world, Christian theologies still informed perspectives on humanity. While social scientific methodologies and theories coalesced, they would continue to draw on the categories of European Christian theologies. The various operations of comparison performed by Christocentric travel writers demonstrated the variability that later contributed to the foundation of humanist ethnography. The near recognition by some writers of examples confounding the expected Hindu-Muslim divide proves one of the characteristics of the ethnographic comparative method: for all of its accidental quality, its reliance on actual observance offers an opportunity (not always heeded) for the traveller's experience to counter expectations and stereotypes. So, for instance, Ralph Fitch noted while visiting the city of Bijapur that the Muslim king has many Gentiles in his court.[116] Such a subtlety would be lost on most later authors who simply described Bijapur as a "Muslim kingdom," erasing the participation of non-Muslims and setting it at necessary odds with "Hindu kingdoms," such as neighboring Vijayanagara. Similarly, William Bowley recognized the intercommunal nature of Kabir devotions and C. B. Leupolt noted how the Brahmo Samaj appeared to have transcended Hindu differences with Christianity. Yet, in each instance, the strength of personal encounter and observation could not overcome the imperative for theological categorical purity.

The spirit of humanism exerted itself in various moments of these Christocentric travelogues. Even as early as the sixteenth century, Fitch noted enviously that "Agra and

Fatepore are two very great cities, either of them much greater than London, and very populous. Between Agra and Fatepore are twelve miles, and all the way is a market of victuals and other things, as full as though a man were still in a town, and so many people as if a man were in a market."[117] Through observations like these—wholly disconnected from the categorical confines and ideological deductions of Christocentric perspectives—Fitch demonstrates the changes infused through humanism that gradually were altering cross-cultural comparisons among many Europeans. Indeed, his very act of traveling as a merchant, beyond the authority of the church, without reference to pilgrimage, crusade, or mission, allowed him to find this common ground with some of the people he encountered. While Christocentric categories and comparative strategies remained influential, humanist models became increasingly prominent, especially in travelogues that hewed away from more theologically framed comparison and provided a different sort of foundation for the crystallization of a new discipline—anthropology—as we shall see in the next chapter.

# Second Theoretical Interlude

## FIVE MODES OF COMPARISON

AS WE HAVE seen, comparison often involves more than a deliberation on similarity and difference. It can also imply hierarchical valuation and temporal progression. Meanwhile, the relation between the categories of comparison can be overlapping, mutually inclusive, or radically exclusive. Hence, the comparison shapes an audience's conclusions about both the differences between the items under consideration and the nature of those items. All of this relies on the "methodical manipulation of difference" identified by Jonathan Z. Smith as inherent to acts of cultural comparison. In order to explain the varying practical effects of these methods, he describes five modes of comparison. We can observe that each epistemic discipline as it developed expressed conclusions through a preferred mode or set of modes. For instance, demographers relied on the statistical mode while biologists opted, first, for the morphological mode and, later, for the evolutionary. However, no matter which mode they chose, most Britons preferred religion as the primary category by which they differentiated Indians from one another and distinguished Indians from Britons. Even though it was hardly a universal, instrumental policy of epistemic divide and rule, when Britons repeatedly emphasized this religious bifurcation using diverse disciplines and modes of comparison, they lent particular persuasive power and cumulative epistemic force to reinforce a perception of difference. Perhaps more than any other genre of representation, travelogues often combined these modes of comparison, as we will explore in the various examples.

But first, let us differentiate between these comparative frameworks identified by Jonathan Z. Smith.*

1. **Ethnographic** representations as described and illustrated in the previous chapter make comparisons from the traveller's vantage point, constantly counterpoising the unfamiliar found in present experience with the familiar based on a distant home (which could lead to either a sense of similarity or difference). The audience enjoys both the anticipated and haphazard comparisons arising from the twin features of most travelogues: the fixity of the traveller's itinerary and the accidents of her journey.[1] While British audiences increasingly sought out works by travellers between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, over time they found fewer surprises in the places virtually encountered. Contemporary viewers of the Daniells' images delighted in the sights of the upper Gangetic Valley—such as Mughal Delhi and the Taj Mahal—seldom viewed by Europeans. But, six decades later, audiences read the travelogues of Emily Eden and Fanny Parks with an expectation that the journey ahead of these travellers would include such sights as a matter of course.[2] Nevertheless, later travel writers could enthrall readers because, although their itinerary may entirely have been preordained, their encounters—both fortuitous and calamitous—along the way were not. Further, the distinctive personality and position of each author meant divergent responses to expected encounters and unequal access to and varying interest in assorted social circles. The difference between the contemporary travelogues of the aristocratic Eden and the middle-class Parks—and between them and their contemporary male counterparts of various social positions—pointedly bears this out. Our discussion of this mode began in the last chapter and continues in the next.
2. **Encyclopedic** traditions arrange information according to broad, thematic categories that are positioned relative to one another without regard to their content. The entry "Music," for instance, includes material on that topic whether it is vocal or instrumental, folk or classical, Bollywood or rap. Its position in an encyclopedia between "Monsters" and "Myanmar" owes nothing to its association with those categories and everything to the accident of its spelling. Hence, the relation of the bits of data included in each category tend to be merely topical and, thus, tenuous. The comparativist often tries to thread items together through subcategories or subthemes, but these are more or less superficial, depending on how divergent the cultures are that are compared.[3] The gazetteers examined in the next chapter manifest this mode of comparison.

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* Anthropologist Bernard Cohn offers a closely aligned approach in regard to colonial forms of knowledge in South Asia. He identifies various "investgative modalities" employed by the British, such as the historiographic, travel, survey, enumerative, museological, and surveillance. Cohn 1996, 5–11.

3. **Morphologies** arrange individual items in a systematized hierarchy beginning with an original element and developing into more and more complex forms. So, for example, at the most basic level, "airplane" refers to a simple, horizontal surface that shapes the flow of air around it. The wing of an aircraft is an example of such a preliminary form of an "airplane." At more complicated levels, "airplane" describes vehicles as large as a football field that rely on thousands of components to move through the air. Although we often associate the organization of creatures and products from simple to complex forms using notions of development and evolution, morphologies do not necessarily infer progressive change over time and are inherently ahistorical. Hence, aeronautical engineers today might develop a particular wing design using more advanced technology than anything found on a 747, but because the new wing represents the most rudimentary form of "airplane," it is morphologically categorized at a more basic level than the forty-year-old Boeing behemoth.[4] As we shall see in chapter 7, the disciplined studies of folklore and religion most often demonstrated this mode of comparison.
4. **Evolutionary** comparisons devise a temporal scheme in which individuals are placed relative to others according to genetic relation to one another. So, for example, biologists consider *Homo sapiens* as a more recent development of primates than our defunct genetic cousins, the Neanderthals. As Smith points out, nineteenth-century scholars combined new evolutionary theories from biology with earlier morphological models from comparative cultural studies. They associated increasing forms of complexity with development, advancement, and progress, so that the primitive rested at the bottom of a long arc of civilizational growth. In doing so, these authors violated Darwin's views of evolution that eschewed attaching any sense of progress to morphological or any other changes that species underwent. For Darwin, change provided only one advantage—heightened survivability in a changing environment—without making new forms *essentially* better.[5] The popular, developmental adulteration of Darwin's thought suggests an influence overlooked by Smith: progressivist themes inherent in Christian salvation-history narratives that traced an arc from idolatry to the Jewish covenant of the law to the Christian covenant of love, as we saw in the last chapter. Perhaps this un-Darwinian application of Darwin offers yet another testimony as to how the ascendency of scientism helped displace Christian theology as a justification for Eurocentrism, while never entirely eschewing theological sentiments. The evolutionary mode of comparison also has pervaded ethnological, archaeological, and religious studies disciplines, as seen in chapters 6 and 7.
5. **Statistical** representations[6] disaggregate a single group into smaller ones, associating each subgroup with an informative number that allows comparison with other subgroups. For example, a current almanac informs us that the group

"Indians" can be disaggregated according to religion: 82% of Indians are Hindu, 12% Muslim, 2% Christian, 2% Sikh, and 1% Buddhist.[7] The rigidity of the stern columns that divide a statistical spreadsheet suggests that the listed subgroups differ from one another in mutually exclusive ways. Although listings might include a column for those who identify with two subgroups, if the spreadsheet involves more than four subgroups it becomes increasingly impractical to list those who identify with the multiplying permutations possible: subgroups A and B, subgroups A and C, subgroups C and D, subgroups B and C, et cetera. Statistics, as mathematical abstractions, promise easily graspable delineations and enumerations of social groups while erasing the possibility for anecdotal examples to illustrate complexity. Chapter 5 on the census will demonstrate this mode in detail.

Each of these comparative methods shapes the results of its comparisons in different ways. Ethnographic comparisons result from the accident or plan of the traveller's itinerary. Encyclopedic traditions appear more objective because they seemingly arrange the organizing categories without regard for their content, making inclusion in each category appear "natural" or self-evident. The similarity of the items collected under a category is emphasized simply by their mutual inclusion *in* the category. Although morphologies need not value items hierarchically according to some measure of complexity, such valuations may be ascribed to them. Evolutionary comparisons may be similarly employed in evaluations privileging either "the original" or "the most evolved" as the best. Finally, statistical representations tend to mask the dissimilarities of and divisions among individual units included in a category—whether there be a dozen or millions of these units—while emphasizing the mutual exclusion among compared categories.

While the various representational genres often have a predilection for one comparative mode, this does not preclude the use of other modes. As we shall see, while travelogues inherently privilege ethnographic comparison, they often draw on other forms of comparison, especially when they cite authorities from different disciplines.

"Without leaving the land of our birth," says Humboldt, "we not only learn to know how the earth's surface is fashioned in the remotest zones, and by what animal and vegetable forms it is occupied, but we may even hope to have delineations presented to us, which shall vividly reflect in some degree at least, the impressions conveyed by the aspect of external nature to the inhabitants of those distant regions," and we may add, of their own history and habits.
—R. G. HOBBES, *Scenes in the Cities and Wilds of Hindostan* (1852), no page number.

# 4

# Humanist Travel Writing

## ASCENT OF EMPIRICISM AND THE ON THE SPOT

HERE, R. G. HOBBES, former East India Company soldier and servant, approvingly quotes Alexander von Humboldt (d. 1859) as he valorizes travelogues that open vistas to the homebound. Not only did Humboldt do much to popularize science as a well-published naturalist, the German also modeled the empirical method as a far-ranging explorer.* The fact that Hobbes—a contemporary, Christocentric travel writer—used Humboldt's voice to promote his own demonstrates how scientistic and Christian paradigms were not mutually exclusive, but were mutually informed by the humanist vision of traveling mentioned in chapter 3. That Humboldt recognized the goal of such traveling as "the comparison of the most widely separated parts" reminds us of the centrality of comparison to all forms of knowledge. Nevertheless, a general divergence between travelogues pinned to Christian theology and those centered on humanism requires a separate consideration of these two forms of travel accounts.

Between the late eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, besides the missionaries discussed earlier, five Britons and an Indian recorded their visits to Chainpur in the context of their wider travels. Their accounts varied in form and audience, yet each proceeded from a humanist perspective that made humanity—not divinity—the measure of what they observed. Despite the Christian identity of some, none emphasized (at least in their

* Indeed, Humboldt's measurements of the ocean current off Peru led to it being naming after him. However, demonstrating the more restrictive attitudes toward information of early British governments, the East India Company denied his and most other naturalists' applications to conduct research in India. Arnold 2006, 39.

descriptions of Chainpur) the relative distance between divine truth and the peoples whom they encountered. Nevertheless, all took religious identity as the primary mark of distinction among Indians, while distinguishing Britons from them in terms only sometimes religious. And all manifested some of scientism's dynamics, specific to their times and terms of expression. These representations included the landscape paintings of Thomas and William Daniell, the autobiography of Thomas Twining, the walking survey of Francis Buchanan, the travelogue of Ram Gopal Singh Chowdhari, and the personal journal of Gordon M. Ray. Before we examine these travellers' portrayals of Chainpur and north India through a series of comparative pairings, we need to place the ethnographic mode in relation to the four other modes of comparison. This allows for a better appreciation of how each mode represented difference and promoted classification in its own distinctive manner—an important realization given that Britons would use all five modes in their collective depiction of Chainpur and their differentiation of Hindus from Muslims, and Indians from Britons.

Our analysis of British representations of Chainpur pivots around three interrelated yet distinct intellectual operations: comparison, classification, and knowing through a form of knowledge. Each representation reflects a choice made in regard to the type(s) of comparison, classification, and form of knowledge that were adopted. Comparison of individual items relies on their classification into groups with shared characteristics and, so, the types of comparison and classification chosen reflect the dictates of the form of knowledge through which the individuals will be known. For example, if I want to sort the music in my collection according to the era each song represents, I need to compare the styles of composition and performance of the various songs in order to determine which belongs to which era. I decide to rely on the works of music historians in order to know which eras existed and what the characteristics of each are. In the preceding theoretical interlude, we examined five modes of comparing people, their societies, and their cultures. Each mode influences differently how classification works and what its outcome looks like. Each form of knowledge, meanwhile, tends to one or more of these modes of comparison as best suited for its endeavors. Hence, subsequent chapters will explore a form of knowledge, indicate what mode(s) of comparison it prefer(s), and discuss how this affects the categories used in depicting Chainpur. In this chapter, we continue our investigation of the ethnographic mode as reflected in humanist travelogues.

## HUMANIST TRAVELOGUES

A culture of travel developed among Georgian and Victorian Britons that demonstrated the pervasive influence of empiricism on official and unofficial British India. Between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, such fervor flared for travel accounts depicting South Asia—as well as for other things Indian—that contemporary observers

described an "Indomania." Paralleling the fate of this fashion, the popularity of these accounts peaked between the 1820s and 1840s before quickly dissipating.[1] Nevertheless, Victoria's crowning as Queen Empress of India at the century's end resuscitated interest in India. Hence, even travelogues that failed to be widely published when completed or that appeared in the period of waning interest sometimes found a later audience. For instance, Francis Buchanan's journal from his Shahabad survey, although completed in 1813, only gained a public audience when the Bihar and Orissa Research Society published it in 1925. Thomas Twining's travelogue had to wait a century until his grandson's efforts made it available. And publishers frustrated R. G. Hobbes's efforts at publishing his travelogue for four decades.

More so than most British representations of India, travelogues were created by officials and non-officials alike. While the Daniells and Chowdhari journeyed of their own accord, authors such as Twining recorded what they saw while traveling in their service to the Company or Crown. For Buchanan and Colin Mackenzie, travel *was* their duty as government-appointed surveyors. Meanwhile, authors like Emily Eden (d. 1869) and Francis Parks (d. 1875) journeyed as the family of officials.

Cumulatively, these accounts made a seminal impression on Britons, not only in the home isles but also in South Asia itself where many Britons did not range far, if at all, from the metropoles of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, nor did some think they needed to given their literary familiarity with the outlands. As literary scholar Ketaki Kushari Dyson has described,

> The route from Calcutta to the 'Upper Provinces' by land and water is described by so many authors that it becomes quite familiar, and we become tourists ourselves, coming to know every halting-place with its main points of attraction and anticipating some of the comments. We know that the traveller will comment on the mutability of human grandeur at Rajmahal, on the achievements of Augustus Cleveland at Bhagalpur, on the fanaticism of Aurangzeb by the mosque at Benares, on the squalor of the streets and the contrast between wealth and poverty at Lucknow. He will record his gasp of delight on seeing the Taj Mahal at Agra and reserve a passing sigh for the fallen house of Timur at Delhi.[2]

References to British accounts in indigenous travelogues attest to the influence of these travelogues on at least some Indians. Of course, Britons hardly offered the first travel descriptions of the subcontinent to Indians. However, few premodern authors could hope to enjoy the broad audiences made possible by the rapidly changing technologies of print and lithographing and the expanding pool of readers made literate by universalist ideals for and new forms of education. Meanwhile, with each passing decade technological changes diminished travel times, costs, and discomforts, thus creating an expanding market for travel literature among potential journeyers.

As Humboldt is indicated to have said in the quote at the chapter's beginning, modernity appeared to shorten travel times and expand travel opportunities within Europe, within South Asia, and between the two. The development of steam propulsion for railroads and ships—both transcontinental and riverine—and the opening of the Suez Canal meant that many Europeans and Indians (among others) enjoyed a world gradually made accessible by the convenience of increasingly homogenized and hegemonic services such as transnational mail routes, overseas banking branches, and international legal protections. Conditions in British India mirrored all these changes, allowing increasing numbers of travellers access to inland areas with diminished difficulty and less risk. For Britons, their expanding political control allowed access to regions previously closed to them.[3] Hence, the Daniells seized the opportunity to one-up their competitor William Hodges by travelling to the Mughal capital at Delhi prohibited to him only a decade earlier. Among those Britons and Indians inspired by travelogues to hit the road in search of their own "on the spot" experience of India, few managed to escape the ethnographic frames and expectations established by these guides. Meanwhile, they also influenced some Indians to craft their own travelogues around their own descriptive frames, as we shall see with Ram Gopal Singh Chowdhari. Thus, while these accounts appeared to embody an empirical ideal, their manifest influence undermined the purported objectivity of those whom they roused to follow in their footsteps and stand in their shoes. Indeed, these works—combined with government-published route guides—later helped give birth to yet another literary genre that would help travellers trace their predecessors' trails while providing an initial frame for their perceptions: the published tour guide.

The influence of travelogues was palpable in the changing hues used by authors in their portrayals of the subcontinent. As historian David Arnold has noted, a sea change in travelogue interest occurred between the arrival of the first Britons in the sixteenth century and the ascent of East India Company (EIC) rule by the end of the eighteenth. Where previous authors may have focused on narrow political or mercantile interests, now the landscape commanded attention in ways entirely parallel to popular tastes in Europe. As Arnold explains, travel writing became "enthused with a new vocabulary of place and taste and an unprecedented medical and scientific interest in topography, climate, vegetation, and landscape." Terminology specific to Indian landscapes (e.g., *ghat*, *jangal*, *bungalow*) became so well known that later Western authors used it freely, with need for neither explanation nor italicization. Arnold notes that by the 1830s a distinctive discourse regarding South Asian landscapes and travel had arisen that served to express ideas and sentiments meant to represent the experience of traveling there. This blended both scientistic and Romantic sensibilities.[4]

Meanwhile a change also overtook British ethnographic descriptions that until the late eighteenth century were dominated by a view of India as a place of awe and wonder. By the early nineteenth century, an increasingly disdainful attitude toward Indians arose that reflected the growing remove of the British from the general populace. On one side

of the coin, as British military, political, and financial successes mounted, their need to involve Indians as partners in their enterprises declined.[5] On the other, the same communications and transportation advances that gave Britons easier access to the subcontinent also effectively shortened the distance between there and Europe, prompting them to increasingly eschew the notion of India as "home" in favor of a distant nation they many had experienced a bare fraction of their lives. That even many "country-born" Europeans who had never visited Europe came to feel this way demonstrates this sentiment's pervasiveness and persuasiveness. In contrast, the British officials and soldiers who served during early Company rule often settled permanently in South Asia, not uncommonly taking Indian brides and adopting indigenous clothing, languages, and customs. The success of early EIC servants often relied on their ability to connect and negotiate with indigenous officials and merchants, who still enjoyed political and commercial dominance. Indeed, enough such opportunities awaited Europeans in Indian courts—and so few awaited them in their continental homelands—that thousands established themselves in various regions, many absconding from Company service. So many, in fact, that when Thomas Roe negotiated the first British treaty with the Mughals in 1616, he insisted on a provision requiring the return of "English fugitives," despite Mughal objections.[†] While significant counterexamples exist, the travelogues generally attest that as the British Empire became more established and domineering, Britons tended to entertain less regard for Indians and India.[6]

In an effort to demonstrate Smith's argument about ethnography, the examples provided in this chapter defy the more conventional models of travelogue seen in the instances from last chapter, most of which took form as publicly available books. In contrast, Thomas and William Daniell primarily depicted their experience traveling in north India through landscape drawings and paintings that, for many, were viewable only if they or an acquaintance could afford to hang one in their home. Others might be seen in exhibitions at such venues as the Royal Academy. The uncle-nephew team also published various sets of their prints as bound volumes that offered not a strictly geographic itinerary, but a series of incidental views that culminated in an overall impression of north or south India, depending on the set. In contrast, Thomas Twining crafted a genre-conforming travelogue not dissimilar to Buchanan's seldom-read and unpolished journal (as distinct from his various accounts of specific districts that synthesized his observations into a frequently consulted, gazetteer-like format). Ram Gopal Singh Chowdhari offered a hybrid of running travel commentary and static gazetteer description. Finally, Gordon M. Ray recorded his observations in his personal journal, which may or may not have been intended for future publication. Despite the divergences among them, these men relied on travel for both the collection of their information and their authoritative claim to accurately, if not authoritatively, represent what they saw.

[†] As Dalrymple reports, Prince Khurram, the Mughal representative who would ascend the Peacock Throne as Shah Jahan, sought to protect the many refugees who had converted to Islam. Dalrymple 2002, 20.

The crux of this authoritative assertion of "realistic" representation rested on these travellers' claims to have been "on the spot." The assertion of accurate depiction based on personal observation relied on the popular acceptance of an empirical ideal. In contrast with medieval travelogues that often replicated mistaken claims about human or natural phenomena so as not to contradict traditional sources such as Pliny and Ptolemy, contemporary travelogues earned authoritative status through the currency of personal observation. This turn could be seen for instance in botany, as local knowledge (usually as synthesized and reported by a European) began to displace previously authoritative texts.[7] Empirical ideals also informed the ethnographies of many Christocentric travel writers and their readers, but the greater truth motivating most of these authors derived not from human observation but from divine message. Christocentric authors tended to measure the gap between non-Christians and Christians, false Christians and true Christians via the revealed or inspired truth of the gospels or the authoritative doctrines of the church. Their experience in the field certainly lent them credibility, but authority ultimately derived either from their god or from their church. In distinct contrast, the authority of humanist travelogues derived entirely from their empirical quality.

Another divergence between humanist and Christocentric travelogues arose from their different frames of comparison. As mentioned, the ethnographic mode draws comparisons between "home" and "away." Many of these authors compared the landscapes, encounters, and individuals they observed in India not only to their natal lands, but also to topography, events, and characters (especially, as Arnold notes, idolaters) in a biblical holy land that they mentally navigated.[8] In contrast, those looking through a humanist paradigm preferred references to ancient Greek and Roman narratives, reflecting the emerging European identity based on a shared "classical" past. As with other differences between the two travelogue paradigms, the characteristics of one were not entirely absent from the other, and humanist narratives included biblical references perhaps as often as Christocentric ones included classical ones. Meanwhile, as an individual traveller's experience grew, the more likely he was to compare not only home and away, but also different realms characterized by foreignness. So, for instance, in Shahabad district Buchanan ruefully concluded, "What I have said concerning the manners of the people in Behar [district], is applicable to those of this district, only that in Chayanpur the people of most ranks have a good deal of bear-like incivility; for instance, the lower classes will endeavour to make a stranger go a wrong road . . . while I have found that many of the higher castes, although they were of no personal consequence, declined any communication."[9]

In order to best illustrate the qualities of these ethnographic descriptions while tracking historical changes in acts of comparison, we will examine the art of Thomas and William Daniell before comparing two sets of writers: Thomas Twining and Gordon M. Ray, and Francis Buchanan and Ram Gopal Singh Chowdhari. The Daniells (who visited Chainpur in 1790) introduce us to the general qualities of travelogues during the Raj, including the authority of "on-the-spot" reporting, the reliance on indigenous information, and the

primacy of "Hindu" and "Muslim" as categories, while also demonstrating the unexpected intrusions of scientism into Romanticism. Contrasts between the recorded visits of Twining (1801–1803) and Ray (1940) show how evolutionary comparison served changing British perspectives. They also reflect the altered relationships between district officers and their charges between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Finally, although both Buchanan (1812) and Chowdhari (1917?) crafted texts that conflated travelogue and gazetteer genres while demonstrating the authority of the empirical, they diverged in their views regarding collecting and communal characteristics. All of these travelogues demonstrate an effort to create an image of Chainpur that relied on specific forms of comparison and categorization.

## THE DANIELLS (1790): THE PICTURESQUE, THE SCIENTIFIC, AND THE HISTORICAL

On January 21, 1790, an English artist and his nephew walked through the flatlands below the steep face of the Kaimur hills. Many of the fields between which they passed were empty of everything but the dry stubble from the winter rice crop harvested the previous month. Some fields shimmered with the red dapples of flowering poppy or were carpeted by the densely packed stalks of *masur* (lentil) plants almost ready for the reapers. A few of the farmers they passed likely worked the tall sugarcane plants cultivated with the plentiful rainwater shed by the hills that hung nearby like an undulating green curtain tracing the Deccan plateau's northern edge in western Bihar. Thomas (d. 1840) and William Daniell (d. 1837) had just crossed this hilly terrain as they made their way to Calcutta, choosing sites of interest to their craft and adjusting their itinerary accordingly. They were returning from their three-year journey "up the country," the term Britons used to describe the voyage from Calcutta upstream along the Ganges to destinations to the northwest. Unusual among their contemporaries, the Daniells had not only reached Delhi—where they had had an audience with the Mughal emperor—but had also trekked into the Himalayas as far as Srinagar, perhaps the first Europeans to do so.[10] They had travelled by boat, elephant, and foot. More than halfway through their return trip to Calcutta, they now dropped out of the Kaimur hills after visiting an ancient temple perched on a pinnacle overlooking the Gangetic Valley and, interrupting their passage to the east, turned temporarily westward. As they made their way to the village of Chainpur, William considered the scenery to change from "very picturesque" to "romantic."[11]

The Daniells were not the first European artists in India, though they would become perhaps the two most influential and famous. A number of the artists who preceded them—mostly portrait painters—had made small fortunes painting for British and Indian patrons. But, because the East India Company recognized the limits of such opportunities, it controlled the number of artists allowed into its domains. Perhaps for this reason, Thomas identified himself on his entry application not as a painter but

as an engraver, since the latter had more latitude for commercial employment. He and his nephew represented a new trend in British art not only on the subcontinent but at home as well. At the time of their outbound voyage, British patrons looked to Dutch, French, and Italian artists for scenery and British ones for portraiture.[12] But new artistic sentiments toward landscapes propelled by the Romantic Movement (which informed contemporary picturesque depictions of the British countryside) coincided with expanded public curiosity regarding foreign lands enabled by the global expansion of colonial and imperial initiatives. Simultaneously, the quickening impulses of scientism promoted the empirical possibilities of visual representations. The ability of their art to manifest simultaneously all of these dynamics at a propitious moment in the art market ensured Thomas and William's success, and their predecessor and competitor's failure.

The competition of the uncle and nephew team with William Hodges provides a useful introduction to the popularity of travel art that conjoined the picturesque, scientistic, and imperial sensibilities of the day with the prevalence of religion as a category of differentiation even in visual representations. Hodges preceded the Daniells to India by a decade. He had already gained some notice as an artist for James Cook's second expedition to the Pacific (1772–1775). In Cook's published travelogue recounting the voyage (1777), the captain included almost three-dozen engraved plates based on Hodges's work. This represented an unprecedented use not only of so many images, but also of images created by an artist accompanying a voyage based on drawings made on location. Earlier accounts tended to use images crafted by a Britain-based artist who devised them based on a reading of the travelogue author's description, not his own experience.[13]

Hodges worked in India for three years, returning to England with drawings that he would there engrave. His collection, *Select Views in India Drawn on the Spot in the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783*, arrived in Calcutta sometime between 1786 and 1788, thus immediately setting him as the competition to beat for the soon-to-arrive Daniells.[14] He followed this with a volume on architecture (1787) and a travelogue (1794) that included engraved scenes. The artist met with critical complaints about the quality of his work and died in relative obscurity due, in part, because he admitted the patronage of Warren Hastings—the first governor general of British India—at a time when Hastings was under investigation for corruption and cruelty.[15] Nevertheless, Hodges's work had an impact since it arrived at a time when empirical impulses among educated Britons coincided with a preference for the picturesque style in art. Humboldt credited an image by Hodges (that he saw at Hasting's house) depicting the Ganges's shore as one of the inspirations for his own South Pacific journey.[16] The artist's work found publication in assorted travelogues.[17] Perhaps more significantly, Hodges set a precedent for travel painting and a benchmark for empirical accuracy that preoccupied the Daniells during their years in India (1786–1794). Thomas crafted the itinerary of their first Indian tour to match that of their predecessor, meticulously ensuring that his party not only visited each site

recorded by Hodges, but surpassed his predecessor's accomplishments by journeying to other places as well. Meanwhile, William repeatedly made comments depreciating Hodges's accuracy in his private journal.

Both sets of artists benefitted from and contributed to the growing authority of visual representation among Britons. What Michel Foucault has argued about the visual today was becoming increasingly so for nineteenth-century Britons: the visual sense alone satisfied empirical expectations. Most of the measurements by which Britons described the size and position of objects and phenomena relied on visible elements: length was measured by looking at a ruler, direction by viewing a compass, and elevation by sighting through a theodolite. Meanwhile, European classification systems reflected a shift to the visual as naturalists abandoned the Aristotelian reliance on an internal or essential quality as an individual's defining feature and focused instead on visual features,[18] such as the reproductive organs of flowers on which Linnaeus based his taxonomy of plants. Today, even when attempting to measure nonvisible phenomena, we often design instruments that transpose invisible impressions into visible expressions. And, so, we measure earth tremors by reading a seismograph, music levels by the pulsing eruptions of digital bars, and heart rates by observing the glowing zigzag of a monitor. As the Daniells wrote in the introduction to their *Picturesque Voyage to India by the Way of China* (1810), "Delineation is the only medium by which a faithful description can be given of sensible images: the pencil is narrative to the eye: and however minute in its relations, can scarcely become tedious; its representations are not liable to the omissions of memory, or the misconceptions of fancy; whatever it communicates is a transcript of nature."[19] Hence, British audiences understood travellers to possess an "ocular authority"[20] and travellers who visually recorded their impressions could be broadly influential.

Both Hodges and the Daniells emphasized that the accuracy of their pictures derived from their having worked "on the spot." Indeed, in his memoir, Hodges emphatically pressed the claim he already signaled in the title of his earlier publication: "It will," he wrote, "not be disagreeable to my readers to be informed, that [the following pages] consist of a few plain representations of what I observed on the spot, expressed in the simplest garb of truth, without the smallest embellishment from fiction, or from fantasy."[21] Attempting to pry the mantle of empirical fidelity from his shoulders, the Daniells took pains to differentiate their images from Hodges's on the basis of their greater accuracy. Their use of unexaggerated lines and employment of the *camera obscura* (a box with a lens that allowed an artist to sketch a scene as projected inside), they contended, demonstrated a greater fidelity to the scene confronted on the spot.[22] Their argument seems immediately to have been accepted by their compatriots. Major James Rennell, first surveyor general of Bengal, corrected his seminal *Map of Hindoostan* based on their paintings.[23] Indeed, the Daniells went so far as to continuously use a perambulator (a measuring wheel pushed as one walks) to determine distances on their north Indian tour. Given their competition, the Daniells' effort to supplant the ocular authority of Hodges comes

as no surprise. In Agra, William sniped in his journal, "Compared Hodges View of the fort with the original & which like all his others is exceedingly faulty."[24] Ironically, the basis on which the Daniells most criticized Hodges qualified their own work: the distortions of the picturesque.

By the late eighteenth century, the picturesque sensibility in art had coalesced, quickened by the writings of William Gilpin. Gilpin argued for an aesthetic apart from the beautiful and the sublime. If the former prompted amusement for its smoothness and regularity and the latter wonder for its solemnity and awesomeness, the picturesque scene, according to Gilpin, offered beauty of a rougher sort, as found in rugged landscapes and ruined buildings. Picturesque scenes gave pause for pondering. Although a picturesque scene might contain sublimity or beauty, these qualities alone could never make a view picturesque. Meanwhile, he warned artists away from singular and curious objects since the artist's attention must be on nature's *usual* forms. Gilpin pointedly declared, "The *lusus naturæ* [freak of nature] is the naturalist's province, not the painter's."[25] Given the attention many period travellers gave to "curiosities" and the Daniells' own interest in "novelties," this rejection is noteworthy. Significantly, Gilpin entitled his second of the three essays in his famous 1792 collection "On Picturesque Travel." He promoted the notion both among those who travelled for practical reasons and among those who travelled for pleasure.[26] Although contemporary uses of the term "picturesque" varied—ranging from Gilpin's specific notions to simply a synonym for "attractive"—Hodges and the Daniells drew from Gilpin's ideas.

In his essays, Gilpin primarily promoted not accuracy but the pleasing effect of an overall scene. This required that three elements should compose every view: mountains and lakes should fill the background, valleys or woods the middle ground, and ruins and broken ground the foreground.[27] If parts of the scene seem too smooth and orderly to fit the picturesque ideal, he informed his readers, "Turn the lawn into a piece of broken ground: plant rugged oaks instead of flowering shrubs: break the edges of the walk: give it the rudeness of a road: mark it with wheel-tracks." In other words, the imagination should run havoc over the tidy scene.[28] Despite their mutual fidelity to Gilpin's precepts, the inaccuracies of Hodges's work that drew the Daniells' criticism derived from the distortions Hodges introduced to scenes in consonance with Gilpin. He emphasized more unrest and jaggedness in landscapes and offered less architectural detail than the Daniells, who favored more classical forms of landscape and accurate architectural depictions.[29] And so the art of Thomas and his nephew derived from two competing impulses: the imaginative and Romantic flourishes demanded by the picturesque and the empiricism and realism favored by a coalescing scientism.

The picturesque tempering of the artists' scientistic impulses definitively shaped the Daniells' ethnographic impact. Whereas some ethnographic artists and, later, photographers created images that depicted individual humans, animals, buildings, and other artifacts apart from their social and natural context, the Daniells' most influential works emphasized overall scenes. Gilpin himself described this quality of the picturesque: "To this

it is enough, that the province of the picturesque eye is to *survey nature*; not to *anatomize matter*…It comprehends an extensive tract at each sweep. It examines *parts*, but never descends to *particles*."[30] With regard to humans, Gilpin explained that they serve only to ornament scenes and rejected anatomical accuracy or exactness in form. Indeed, reasserting his general emphasis on depicting nature's variety, he declared, "we merely consider general shapes, dresses, groups, and occupations; which we often find *casually* in greater variety, and beauty, than any selection can procure."[31] If the picturesque derived from the rationalism-resisting Romantic Movement, this dictate would signify a denunciation of the more extreme positivistic and Cartesian tendencies in contemporary science that conceited to know an individual as an autonomous object and the group through a representative individual.

At first glance, it might appear that such landscape art did not intend toward the ethnographic. Few of the Daniells' images focused on individuals or communities. However, one example from the Chainpur area, an oil painting by Thomas, demonstrates how, occasionally, even a work's title could be ethnographic: "An Indian with his cattle, etc., having ascended in safety a dangerous pass in the mountains, returns thanks to Ganesa, the guardian of the Ghauts: A Scene in Chrympore district."[32] This 1816 image would be one of the first and few purely ethnographic images the pair displayed at the Royal Academy. That Thomas and his nephew recognized the potential audience for such works was obvious from when they first advertised their art in Calcutta, Madras, and London. They promised images of Oriental scenery, superb architecture, and "with such other incidental accompaniments as have a reference to the manners and customs of the inhabitants."[33] Hodges had recognized the same audience interest, and ended his travelogue with the assertion that pictures would exceed their mere artistic value "were they connected with the history of the various countries, and did they faithfully represent the manners of mankind."[34] Nevertheless, Hodges's representations did not differ markedly from those of the Daniells, which emphasized buildings, landscapes, and inscriptions with little detail of people, villages, or cities.

The images that Thomas and William Daniell executed during their visit to Chainpur demonstrate all of these various features of their art, as well as the categorical imperatives of their time. After they first descended from the Kaimur Plateau to the warmer Gangetic plain and before heading to Chainpur, they stopped at the nearby village of Ramgarh (a site associated with Chainpur's most famous narrative, as we shall see) for three days. There, they climbed a conical hill that towered above the area and explored the ancient temple perched atop it. Per their usual practice, the two set about making drawings of interesting scenes—in this case the Mundeswara[‡] temple and its associated sculptures and inscriptions, as well as Ramgarh village and its temple—that they might later use to create a painting or an engraved images for public publication.

[‡] Today, this temple is more commonly known as the Mundeswari temple, dedicated to the goddess of that name despite the architectural centrality of the Shiv *linga* apparent in one Daniell image and still extant today.

Indeed, the artists included two aquatints (an etching technique allowing the publication of watercolor-like images) of the temple in their fifth collection of published images (1799). The first picture, as seen in Illustration 7.3, depicts the temple's dilapidated external condition. Between the tree-shadowed pile of strewn, cut stones at the forefront and the green plain bounded by mist-like hills in the distance, a diminutive figure emerges from the building's interior darkness. He steadies himself by gripping the finely carved doorframe as he climbs out of the overgrown mound, which is the temple buried beneath its own ruined pinnacle. Meeting the prescribed qualities for the background, middle ground, and foreground while including rugged natural and architectural forms with indefinite human forms, the image meets Gilpin's requirements for a picturesque scene. Indeed, using a tactic promoted by Gilpin, the Daniells manipulate the background mountains to appear more distant than they are in actuality. In contrast, however, a companion aquatint—depicting the temple's interior—abandons the picturesque for the documentary. Perfectly centering the image's frame on the foremost two of the four pillars supporting the roof above the phallic representation of Shiv, the picture provides architectural specificity of the highest order. It depicts no element of decay except, perhaps, some minor discoloration on the ceiling. All the architectural lines are crisply linear without sign of wear or abrasion. A single devotee bows in reverence to the central image, which the artists have portrayed in great detail: a *linga* set in a *yoni* (a vessel-like symbolic representation of the goddess) and embellished fourfold with the god's visage along its sides (three faces are evident). The verbal description of the interior that accompanies the image in a later volume mirrors the aquatint's architectural tone.[35] These two images demonstrate how scientism and the picturesque—despite a shared rootedness in empiricism—could differently impel at least one set of artists.

Their work in Ramgarh completed, the Daniells, their assistants Charles and Johnny Diaz,[§] and whatever servants traveled in their party turned toward Chainpur. What motivated them to go there—in the opposite direction of their Calcutta return—remains unclear. As opposed to the locations they had visited after leaving Benares, Chainpur did not appear on Hodges's itinerary. Although the village appears on some of Rennell's maps, to which they had access, many other settlements do too that they did not visit. It is perhaps most likely that local residents—Indian or British or both—informed them about picture-worthy objects in the area. Indeed, two attendants, "Mohen and a Bangy,"[**] who helped provision the party caught up with them in Chainpur after waiting four days for them at a site to the east, suggesting that they unexpectedly had turned away from their next anticipated stop.[36] Perhaps the zamindar of Ramgarh gave them the idea while he negotiated their provisioning and stay near his village.

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§ Mildred Archer presumed the assistants to be Eurasians of Indian and Portuguese heritage. Archer 1980, 38–39.

** A *Bhangi* is a member of a caste traditionally associated with sweeping work.

Their reliance on Indian assistants and the local zamindar demonstrates how the Daniells—like many early Britons—depended upon informally obtained indigenous help for their work. Travelling entirely on the proceeds they had raised by selling their art in Calcutta, the Daniells preferred to rely on the hospitality of British officials, in part because their British identity did not always ensure cooperation from Indians. However, in most areas where no Europeans resided—and such was the case for Shahabad district as late as 1788[37]—the artists had to depend on local zamindars and indigenous officials to provide supplies. While travelling in less well-mapped areas, the artists relied upon locals to guide them. In places, they had trouble convincing villagers to provide guides, a difficulty they reencountered while meandering their way across the Kaimur plateau. Local officials could also stymie their progress, as they found both when their entry to Agra's fort was denied for lack of a pass and when the diwan forbade access to the fort in Delhi without the emperor's permission.[38] Clearly, the connections these travellers had with British officials opened doors for them, but the Daniells carried no formal authority of their own.

The art resulting from their stay in Chainpur demonstrates not only their particular blend of scientism and the picturesque but also Thomas and William's overall sentiments regarding the classification of Indians, their architecture, and their past. The import of the latter two points in the Daniells' ethnographic reflections bears examination here. As the Daniell party came upon Chainpur, they set camp near what they described as the "Tomb of Aktear Khan," their descriptions of which we shall see at the chapter's end. Their label of it as a Muslim building reflects how Thomas and William largely described Indian architecture only in terms of Hindu, Muslim, and British (although they later noted that "Patan artists" fashioned one local building). Hodges had done the same, as reflected in the title of his 1787 book, *Dissertation on the Prototypes of Architecture, Hindoo, Moorish, and Gothic*.[39] Indeed, upon their return to England, Thomas Daniell would be commissioned to paint "Composition: Hindu and Muslim Architecture" (1799), which would portray the Taj Mahal as background to a large south Indian temple with a tank in between.[40] Two decades later, they would describe the Mundeswari temple as of "ancient Hindoo style."[41] Many of the images he and William made in Chainpur demonstrate their basic bifurcation of Indians into religious categories that precluded much acknowledgement of categorical overlap or intercommunal interaction.

Perhaps presuming that their home audience would most relish images reflecting on the "Mahommedan" rule British armies had recently supplanted in north India, the Daniells focused on purportedly Muslim architecture going up country and Hindu architecture only upon their return to Bihar. In general, their works emphasized examples of monumental architecture—the largest of temples, mosques, tombs, palaces, and fortresses. When a native state was responsible for the construction of one of these, the Daniells sometimes took the building as a reflection on the character of its rule. They commonly viewed mosques as the work of jealous Muslim leaders who destroyed competing area temples. So, for example, in the formidable Rohtasgarh fortress south of Sasaram, they found both a temple and mosque in ruins. Interpreting the contemporary

scene via an already-accepted narrative projecting an ancient Hindu India subjugated by conquering Muslim foreigners, the Daniells concluded on no other evidence that the state of the two buildings that Muslims had partially destroyed the temple and then built the mosque nearby. In fact, the temple postdated the initial Muslim conquests, when Bihar's (Hindu) governor Man Singh improved the fortress under the (Muslim) emperor Akbar's orders.[42] For the Daniells, the decay evident at Rohtasgarh, the Taj Mahal, Akbar's tomb in Sikandra, and Jai Singh's observatory in Delhi not only communicated these buildings' grandeur, but also the decline inevitable for intolerant and despotic Muslim states.[43] As we shall see in chapter 7, this fascination with "antiquities"—associated with the "discovery" of a society's past through relics that evidence civilizational prominence and decline—would ultimately spawn a new discipline: archaeology.

On the other hand, Hindus tended to be more favorably depicted by the Daniells, perhaps because the uncle and nephew supposed Hindus shared with them an appreciation for natural phenomena. William noted the "solemnity of Hindoo worship," sometimes referred to their use of "idols" without deprecation, and rationalized the veneration of waterfalls by these "good people." Nevertheless, impatience with Hindu deification of natural elements led him to also remark on their "superstitious folly" and denigrate those who acted as "fabricators of mythological systems," a comment that reflected the British disparagement of Brahmans as frauds and deluders,[44] a sentiment also common among officials and missionaries.[††] Hindus and Muslims, therefore, seemed as distinct as their architecture.

The Daniells rarely allowed for the possibility of Hindu and Muslim interaction despite evidence of it. Not recognizing the non-Islamicate qualities of the Taj Mahal imparted by the significant numbers of Hindu artisans who contributed to it, Thomas could only describe it as "Mahomedan architecture."[45] Despite a visit to the *dargah* or shrine of Salim Chishti, neither took any notice of the shared worship among Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and others that has characterized the site for centuries. In general, the Daniells offered little, if any, attention to worship. While not devoid of people, their architectural depictions minimized the role of humans to the role outlined by Gilpin: ornaments for the scenery. Meanwhile, their observations of and engagements with the Indians among whom they travelled undermined in their minds neither the basic narrative of Muslim intolerance and Hindu victimization nor its associated mutually exclusive categories. Their few depictions of villages also offered no challenge as they emphasized landscape over social interaction. Nevertheless, we must note that the Daniells' use of religious identifiers appeared limited to architecture; their descriptions of people—either in the texts they wrote to accompany their art or in William's journal—seldom relied on religion as a qualifier, except when they referred to rulers.

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[††] Under the heading "Hindoo Delusions," a contemporary missionary publication printed excerpts from Bowley's journal that testified to multiple instances of Brahman fraud. "Contrived," "scheme," "pretender," and "extort" are all words the Anglo-Indian evangelist used relative to Brahmans and some of their ministrations. *Panoplist* 1820, 468.

All of these features of the Daniells' influential art intersect in their "Exterior of an Eed-Gah near Chaynpore, Bahar" (see Illustration 4.1). Conforming to picturesque ideals again, the object of the painting, an *idgah*, stands between a background of grey distant hills, a placid water body, and stalk-like palms and a foreground of two cloth-draped figures sitting upon broken ground that falls off to the right into a yawning ravine. The brooding black-green of an expansive tree enveloping the space within the *idgah* highlights through contrast the warm tan hues of the building's sunlit sandstone walls. Originally published in 1799 with only its title, when republished two decades later the aquatint came with a verbal description. It explains,

> An Eed-Gah is a place designed for the performance of solemn festivals by the professors of the Mahomedan religion. The interior of this building is extremely plain, and does not possess any thing [*sic*] worthy observation [*sic*] respecting art. It is of an open quadrangular form, somewhat resembling the courts before the Musjeds or Mosques of the Mahomedans, of which there is an example in the Jummah Masjed of Delhi, in the first series of this collection of Oriental scenery. This view represents a part of the exterior of the building. The general forms are uncommon, as well as the embellishments, which nevertheless are extremely rich and not inelegant. It is said to be of the workmanship of Patan artists.[46]

ILLUSTRATION 4.1. Thomas and William Daniell, "Exterior of an Eed-Gah near Chaynpore, Bahar." 1799. Ames Library of South Asia, University of Minnesota.

Perhaps bending to the demands of their viewers, Thomas and William provided written descriptions for all of the 150 views in the 1816 volume, situating most of the objects of each picture in an artistic, geographical, historical, and ethnographic context. Thus, the *idgah* represents a Muslim structure in terms of usage, users, and layout, although it diverges from other Muslim architecture because of Pathan influence.

Yet despite the culminating ethnographic and archaeological urges for "on the spot" verisimilitude, the *idgah* image demonstrates the sacrifices necessary to placate the demands of both the picturesque and categorical exclusivity. First, Thomas—who most likely made the original drawing—exaggerated the height of the walls relative to the human figures. Second, he imaginatively refashioned the building's setting to fit the formal requirements of a picturesque landscape. In fact, no such ravine next to the tomb either appears on the village's revenue map drawn six decades later or exists today. Nor is it likely that any large water body could have been seen from the vantage point used. Finally, and somewhat mysteriously, the building depicted is not an *idgah* at all, but a tomb. Although others have argued that this misidentification was a mistake,[47] the evidence available can only suggest otherwise.

In terms of this evidence of deliberate mislabeling, the image most obviously includes a large dome visible just beyond the structure's walls. Nevertheless, the Daniells' own description of the building admits no such structure, describing the interior as "extremely plain." Nor would any *idgah* likely have a dome, let alone a tomb, since they are meant to provide a clean, enclosed prayer space solely used for the communal prayers held during the two annual Id holidays. Meanwhile, nowhere in his journal—which he used to record verbal details of some of the scenes he and his uncle rendered—does William mention an *idgah*. However, he does note that his uncle made a drawing of a tomb whose name he left blank.[48] No such drawing exists among the duo's surviving images. Perhaps the most plausible explanation for this intentional mistake is that the Daniells, upon their return to England, felt the need to represent a type of Muslim building that they had failed to satisfactorily draw "on the spot." The same ethnographic interests that compelled them to provide descriptive paragraphs for each of their previously published images may have motivated them to refashion a tomb into an *idgah*, informed by the same imaginative spirit that prompted them to turn fields into gullies. Then, their collection would have more completely catalogued the structures associated with Muslim religion: mosques, *dargah*s, and *idgah*s. Indeed, this encyclopedic impulse is evident in the very structure of their *Antiquities of India* that featured the Chainpur images: it divides into two parts, the first of which includes representations of only Hindu temples. If these motivations did compel the Daniells, then their depiction of Chainpur's phantom *idgah* would demonstrate yet again how both the picturesque and ethnographic impulses shaped their efforts to illustrate India for their anticipated audience.

The Daniells' success overshadowed not only that of Hodges, but also of almost all other British artists who would follow them to South Asia. From the start, the sets of

images that they published upon return to England sold readily. Perhaps recognizing the promotional value of the artists' work—which showed the decay of former civilizations now arrested by a serene, orderly British rule—the East India Company (EIC) purchased thirty sets of the first volume (which was dedicated to its Court of Directors) for the considerable sum of £210.[49] Although Company officials in India would not sponsor them during their stay there, they recognized the utility of the Daniells' art and notified the directors that "[t]he Ingenuity, and good Character of these Artists claim our particular Notice."[50] At home, the artists frequently exhibited their works at the Royal Academy. Although the oils that the Daniells used went out of fashion by the last half of the nineteenth century, interest in their art revived with Queen Victoria's declaration as Empress of India (1877) and, so, nine of their paintings were displayed at the Festival of Empire Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1911.[51] Demonstrating that the artists' currency did not diminish even in the twilight of empire, in Bengal alone Maharaja Bahadur Sir Prodyot Coomar Tagore maintained a large collection of their works in the 1930s, as did Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan. In England, their pictures hung in the Royal Geographical Society, the India Office, and the India Museum in South Kensington.[52] Although the price of the portfolios and oils exceeded the means of anyone but the elite, the reproduction of the images on china and wallpaper[53] and as book illustrations helped disseminate them to a larger audience.

Rennell praised Thomas's "*firm attachment to truth, and honesty of discrimination*."[54] In his efforts at preserving Indian, especially Mughal, monuments, Viceroy Curzon also held the Daniells' work in high regard.[55] Later, the Archaeological Survey of India used their paintings in their efforts to restore the Rohtasgarh temple.[56] Although the initial success of Thomas and William Daniell relied upon their effective satisfaction of the empirical urges of both the picturesque and scientistic movements, the mounting hegemony of scientism for both British and Indian audiences secured them an enduring role in fashioning the ethnographic picture of South Asia for their time.

## THOMAS TWINING (1801–1803) AND GORDON M. RAY (1940)

The differences between the narratives of Thomas Twining and Gordon M. Ray reflect the strikingly different eras when each both officiated over Shahabad and toured in Chainpur. Twining stood among the first European officials stationed in the district and Ray among the last. Both men viewed themselves as critical components of a British government that brought stability to Shahabad. Yet, their views of their charges diverged significantly—as did their impression of religion's role in local society—reflecting crucial classificatory changes among Britons and South Asians. Ultimately, Twining's travelogue emphasizes his constant, close interactions with Chainpur residents in order to demonstrate his epistemic and political authority, while Ray's journal uses racial categories as an explanation for his social distance. Despite these differences, both used an image of

Chainpur residents—and Indians in general—as inherently religious and religiously divided so as to legitimate British rule.

Little more than a decade after the Daniells visited Chainpur, Thomas Twining (d. 1861) began making visits as the district's new collector (1801–1803),[57] among the first there under British rule. Although the son of an important tea merchant and EIC director, and great-grandson of Thomas Twining whom Queen Anne made purveyor of teas in 1711,[58] this Thomas Twining began to work his way up the Company ladder at the age of sixteen.[59] His tenure in India started in a period when orientalists focused primarily on ancient and medieval texts, few Britons traveled far beyond the capital cities, ethnographic descriptions were scarce, and British officials' need for knowledge was satisfied more through their personal interactions with Indians than published official sources. To wit, the year after Twining's Indian arrival, Hodges had observed, "The public is, indeed, greatly indebted to the learned labours of gentlemen, who have resided there, for the information which they have afforded concerning the Laws and the Religion of the Hindoo tribes; as well as for correct and well digested details of the transactions of the Mogul government. But of the face of the country, of its arts, and natural productions, little has yet been said."[60] Although Twining's work would not be published until the end of the nineteenth century, his travelogue reflects the comparative instincts of many of his contemporaries.

Twining's volume, *Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago with a Visit to the United States* (1893), would be posthumously published by his grandson. The volume covers his first visit to India (1792–1795) and a later journey to America. It reflects a vastly different age than the one of its publication: an era when British officials, often far removed from their Indian capital and one another, lived in close personal proximity to their charges. Indeed, two of his predecessors in Shahabad's collectorship, William Augustus Brooke and John Deane, both had Indian wives. Deane's wife, Beebee Mhoboob Buxsh,[61] buried him in the garden outside one of Arrah's mosques.[62] Twining evinces a pride both in his position and for his district, which often shades into paternalism. These sentiments particularly extend to the residents of Chainpur whom he both calls "my old friends its inhabitants"[63] and goes out of his way to describe. Twining crafts his Indian travelogue to conform to the genre by narrating a journey "up the country" along the Ganges. Although this particular riverine experience occurred almost a decade *before* Twining began his duties in Shahabad, he takes the opportunity while narratively passing the banks of that district to break the operative temporal and geographic frame and describe his future experiences with Chainpur's residents, who live no short distance from the river. Twining's decision to resituate more recent events within the context of his earlier Ganges trip may reflect a recognition that the "up the country" narrative frame would appeal to a larger audience than an autobiographical narrative might.[64] In any case, his caricature of Chainpur helped establish a trope of the truculent yet meritorious Bihari man. "The population of this, the most extensive division of Shahabad, is an eminently martial people, easily enflamed, and impatient of control, but with management and firmness, their subordination is easily secured.

A more intimate acquaintance with the inhabitant of Cheynpore discovers in his character many excellent qualities which his pride and haughty demeanor conceal from transient observation. He is brave, high-minded, and faithful; and if too ready to draw his sword, it is generally to defend his rights, or what he conceives to be such, and not to attack those of his neighbour."[65] Chainpur's reputation for trouble developed under Brooke, the district's first collector. In 1791, he suggested that the disobedient conduct of Chainpur's zamindar be answered by the demolition of the forts found in some of the area's villages. Tensions appear soon to have exploded into full-blown insurrection for which Brooke blamed locals Sagwan Lal, Sitaram Bhar, and the latter's two sons.[66] Perhaps this unruliness derived from excessive British revenue demands that had led to Brooke's proposal for rent changes to "ensure the relief of anxious millions."[67] In any regard, Twining's characterization of Chainpur's inhabitants is also noteworthy in that it implicitly elides women and relies upon unspoken comparison with the male residents of other regions.

In 1938, Gordon Meredith Ray (d. 1993), an Indian Civil Service officer, arrived for training at the headquarters for Chainpur's sub-division. The acts of comparison made by this twenty-six year old served neither the town nor its residents well: "Bhabua is certainly one of the most ghastly places I have ever been in. There is no bazaar to speak of. Only a few tumble-down mud huts clustered round a cross-road. The inhabitants look more lousy and venomous than most I have seen." He feared that the nearby high English school—as it was termed—was "very Congress." Most of all Ray worried of a long-term posting there, in which case "I should probably take to drink or else 'go native.' I think the utter loneliness—no European company whatsoever—would get on my nerves most." He characterized Bhabua as "the loneliest 'outpost of empire,'"[68] and was none too pleased when it would be his first position as sub-divisional officer (SDO). Although Ray's journal never made its way into publication, it both offers the last-known travelogue of Chainpur during the era of British rule and bears testimony to shifts and continuities in comparisons among many Britons as their empire waned.[‡‡]

Scholarship on Britons in India often struggles to avoid a stereotype of its own: that of the bigoted British official. At times, authors have presumed the most prejudice and worst motives on the least evidence. The murderous historical model of Reginald Dyer of the Amritsar massacre and illiberal literary figures such as Ronald Merrick from Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* and Mr. Westfield from George Orwell's *Burmese Days* seem to offer too easy a template from which to cut historical figures under investigation. It would be similarly tempting to view Ray in this light. His primary terms of

[‡‡] For a variety of reasons, Ray's unpublished journal earns our consideration. First, while it remains unknown whether or not Ray intended to offer his journal to a press, the fact that he did publish a book of verse shows that he had literary interests. Second, the translations of simple Hindi and Urdu phrases that the journal includes suggest that he was considering an audience other than himself as he wrote. Third, the journal demonstrates how thoroughly Ray fit the role of the empirical travel writer. Although he offers few details about his location or the people whom he observes, he firmly demonstrates the other traits evinced by humanist travellers, including the urge to collect and an interest in drawing and painting his surroundings.

comparison for Indians derive from ethnic and racial difference, and he has little praise to offer any. However, some greater context helps to avoid simple conclusions. Perhaps most importantly, Ray has little praise for *anyone*, including the few Europeans he mentions. This is, after all, his personal journal, and it may have served—as diaries often do—as an outlet for his more negative feelings that he perhaps hid from public view. Indeed, Ray reflexively noted on his own temperament at times, "A rude Englishman in the East is the most unbearable of God's creatures."[69] Given the positive feelings attached to Chainpur residents' few memories of him, it remains possible that his engagements with locals were warmer than the diary admits. Nevertheless, the overall tenor of Ray's reflections on the area diverges significantly from Twining's.

Twining particularly celebrated the masculine and martial qualities he perceived among the Chainpur area's male residents. Indeed, local contestations to EIC revenue collections notwithstanding, under successive collectors Chainpur continued to serve as an important British military recruitment ground throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, as it had during the last third of the eighteenth. As Twining enthused,

> If not the most quiet and submissive subject in peace, it should be considered that India scarcely possesses his equal in war. It is acknowledged that the best sepoys come from this part of Shahabad. A prudent administrator of this province will endeavour to gain the affections of a people who, pleased, are strong in their attachment, but whose resentment would be truly formidable, if provoked by scorn or injustice…I reckoned that in case my district were [*sic*] attacked, I could assemble in this part 20,000 men upon whose valour and fidelity I could depend.[70]

Twining's confidence in Chainpur's soldiering reflected the fact that Shahabad district served as the Company's core market for military labor until 1857, while his caution about the consequences of resentment proved prescient when the district strongly supported the rebellion that began that year.[§§] Heavy British recruitment in the Bhojpuri-speaking area—which included Shahabad district as well as its neighbors to the north and west—continued a tradition among north Indian rulers of the preceding four centuries, including Sher Shah Suri and the Mughals.[71]

Twining's characterization of Chainpur's inhabitants as an undifferentiated male mass diverges from the general tone of his account, which seldom makes universal claims about groups of Indians. For instance, he views Mughal India as comprised of multiple countries and nations.[72] In part, this aversion to generalization may stem from a sensitivity developed over the course of his work as collector. As historian Michael Katten observes

[§§] Not only had the Company recruited many sepoys from the area, they established former sepoys in "invalid thanas" here as well. These converted uncultivated land into retirement settlements that, given Chainpur's proximity to the Maratha frontier, helped provide additional security. Singh 1980, 123–124.

in regard to village boundary disputes in Andhra Pradesh, such occasions as these when officials like Twining served as arbiters in local disputes helped educate the officials about Indian perspectives. Not only did he hear the differing views in these instances, Twining also had to pay attention to the modes of argumentation, the means of legitimation, and the sources of authority deployed by locals. This helped make district-level officials both important in the information regimen constructed by the British imperial state and more likely to recognize the overlap in Hindu and Muslim sensibilities, discourses, and concerns, although there was no guarantee, of course, that the official would engender such sensitivities.[73]

In contrast, Ray more occasionally draws on just such all-Indian assumptions. Throughout his journal, as he struggles to wrestle with his perception of Indian foreignness, Ray demonstrates Smith's argument that the ethnographic mode of comparison often stems from the traveller's effort to understand difference. So, in an instance prompted by an exasperating day dealing with seemingly trivial court cases, he declares, "The mental processes of the Indian villager is beyond me" [*sic*]. Reflecting on the odd-numbered amounts of cash given by Chainpur residents to support the war effort, Ray observes that "the Indian regards an even number as being inauspicious," and so someone offered 11 rupees instead of the rounded-off 10 rupees "as one would expect!"[74] Just as Ray more readily uses all-Indian stereotypes than Twining, so his descriptions of those around him reflect a racial classificatory paradigm far more definite than Twining's vague qualification of regional characteristics.

Upon arrival in Bhabua to begin his unwelcome assignment, Ray sizes up some of the local staff. "My subordinate officer is a very black Graon from Ranchi—I have already christened him Snowball—who is scared stiff of me... His chief interest in life is in rearing a large family—I have already counted seven of them—all pitch black. He is a Roman Catholic which may account for the fecundity. The only other person here who can speak English is a fat, sleepy... Bengali doctor—who was 'exiled' to Bhabua."[75] Later, Ray describes one of the court's judges as "A tall, weedy rather effeminate Madrasi" whom he considers a very competent lawyer, "as so many of these Madrasis are."[76] Although he never describes physically the Europeans he mentions, Ray considers them "white"*** and rues that the closest such neighbors live fifty miles away.[77]

These disturbing comments demonstrate the ascent of racial comparison among many Britons. By the twentieth century, "race"—an Anglophone term long used to reference any group sharing a common ancestor—correlated with skin color and genetic dispositions, a topic to be considered at length in chapter 6. Meanwhile, a popular vision of evolution refracted through a lens of Social Darwinism suggested a hierarchy of biological difference. This provided a scientistic rationale for those Britons who sought to remain apart socially and sexually from Indians. Dyson summarizes the situation well: "Racial

*** Interestingly, Ray writes "white" within quotation marks, perhaps suggesting a grudging recognition that he, too, can be color designated.

prejudice increased and as British communities in India expanded in size, they at the same time became more exclusive and enclave-like, more preoccupied with themselves than with exploring India. With the modernization of transport and postal communication between the two countries, the expatriates became more homeward-looking and less interested in their 'adventures' in a foreign land…but a significant stream of minority opinion strove to counter this mood."[78] By the twentieth century, many British officials also had European wives with whom they made families. The situation could not have differed more from the days of Buchanan and Twining when British officials outside Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay would not have expected easy congress with one another and, so, many became involved with the communities—and particularly the women—around them.

Therefore, an evolutionary comparison may lurk within Ray's racist sensibilities. At the turn of the century, one author had already noted how his fellow Britons deployed science to support racial claims. In his 1907 volume on Indian religions, former Lahore college professor John Campbell Oman observed how "carried away by conceit, a dominant race naturally arrogates to itself a fundamental, inherent, and permanent superiority, and Western science explains such claims by setting up anthropological standards based on morphological, and especially craniological peculiarities; and offers various plausible theories of race evolution."[79] Ray's journal entries offer neither analytic ruminations nor bibliographic references, so it remains unclear whether or not racial science informs much of his color-consciousness. But given the general racist milieu pervasive among his contemporaries in India, it was likely not far away from his thoughts.

Clearly, Ray struggles to understand the unfamiliar and, at times, relies upon received lore circulating in the European community. In at least one instance, he allows the authority of this received wisdom to outweigh his three years of experience in India. Upset at the treatment by a local carriage driver toward his horse, the SDO complains "I had always heard that cruelty and indifference to animals was of the many unpleasant traits in the average Indian's character—but I had never had any personal experience of it before."[80] In other words, Ray's one encounter—however unique to his experience—affirms a received stereotype. Hence, the young officer's efforts to interpret perceived difference through experience-fed comparison have been heavily swayed by traditions of disassociation promulgated by many members of the European community.

In stark contrast, Twining positions himself as someone with greater understanding of "Cheynporeans" than those limited to passing familiarity, because he has lived among them. He waxes, "I had a commodious bungalow in this part of the district, and generally spent a little time there in the winter months. It commanded a fine view of the southern hills. Here I slept in the midst of these warriors, without a lock or a bolt on my door, and never experienced nor apprehended the slightest molestation."[81] To illustrate both the men's militancy and his expertise, Twining describes how he narrowly averted a conflict between the peoples of Chainpur and Sasaram. The conflict over water rights had culminated with both sides ranged across from one another when he fortuitously arrived to

interject himself (and his elephant) between the two lines and negotiate a solution. Twining reinforces this demonstration of both the temperament of Chainpur residents and his informed acumen, noting that his predecessor had failed to manage a similar conflict as successfully and four hundred died as a result.[82]

While the young Company officer appears anxious to communicate the wisdom of his decisions and the power of his position (as evidenced by numerous, sometimes awkward, references to riding on his elephant, which seems the premier self-professed symbol of his status and authority), he repeatedly explains how observation humbles his expectations regarding the land and its people. So, for instance, when Twining passes from Bengal into Bihar, he declares, "So different were many things that I saw from what I had hitherto seen, that I almost seemed to be arrived in a new country."[83] While some Europeans compared India and home to exert both their mastery of knowing the subcontinent and the differences between the two lands, Twining extols comparative differences in Indian regions to emphasize the importance of his observations and experience, while also suggesting similarities between Europe and South Asia. Although Ray also describes differences between regions—notably between the "general air of well-being" in the neighboring Upper Provinces (U.P.) and the "shoddy, derelict, down-and-out air" of Bihar[84]—and the particular poverty of the Bhabua locality,[85] he appears to do so with less interest in promoting his authority than in demonstrating his ill-fortune.

Although the difference between Twining's and Ray's comparisons may come down to their divergent aims in writing, changes in British knowledge may also be a cause. Given the increasingly expansive, specialized, and complicated matrix of knowledge dedicated to India and Indians that existed by 1940, Ray may have had little hope of contributing to it. In contrast, 140 years earlier, Twining had realized how little most Britons in India knew about India given their restriction to Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. Instead of books—only a very few of which he references, including the *Ain-i Akbari*[86]—his primary sources appear to be observation and conversations, which he carries out in Hindustani and Persian. In his effort to describe India to his fellow Britons, Twining balances notions of difference with likeness when, for example, he declares Bihar "the Wales of the Mogol empire, being the hereditary estate of the Emperor's eldest son."[87] Elsewhere, he states, "The religions of India, like those of Europe, have their schisms." These comparisons provide measures of similarity by which categorical difference might be overcome, something of little interest to Ray and many of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, both authors would share a notion of religious difference that they used to justify British rule.

Like the Daniells, Twining rarely identifies individuals whom he meets by their religion, but in the larger picture takes religion as the basic division of South Asians. When he describes and engages individuals, he judges them according to their morality, not religion. For instance, while Twining excoriates Aurangzeb and Sher Shah for their historical behavior (which blunts his interest in preserving the latter's tomb in Sasaram), he makes no mention of them as Muslims. However, despite the nuance he demonstrates when discussing individuals and his district, when Twining generalizes about all Indians in the

context of history, he describes them as Hindus and Muslims, whom he sees in constant competition. In Twining's stereotypes, Hindus are passive and Muslims violent, as evident in his depiction of Benares's downfall: "It is not surprising that the rich temples of a defenceless Hindoo city should attract the bigotry and rapacity of the Mahomedan invaders."[88] That this portrayal of the Hindu victim relied upon the co-construction of the militant Muslim stereotype helps explain why the author would assume that the "Hindoo city" was "defenceless" against the Afghan conquest, when he elsewhere alludes to the (Hindu) raja Chait Singh's spirited defense of the city against Hastings. Hence, *in comparison with one another*, Hindus and Muslims manifest these essential, respective qualities of passivity and aggression. But *in the context of British rule*, not only does the city's opposition become more honorable, but Indians' religious qualities—though still definitional—come to be constrained. More than once, Twining repeats an observation he makes while viewing Benares from a mosque's minaret.

> Singular it was to look down from this pinnacle upon the scene beneath, to see and hear the most hostile sects, the conqueror and the conquered, the oppresser and the oppressed, the haughty Mussulman, and the humble Hindoo, peacefully assembled a short distance from each other, and blending in their devotions, "Ali al Allah," with "Ram, Ram,"—words which would once have been the signal of defiance and destruction, but now uttered without reproach, and heard without offence. It was the tiger and the kid lying down together under the equal protection afforded by a just and benevolent administration of the laws of a free and Christian country.[89]

Therefore, for Twining, the British presence—his presence—mollifies the disruptive divisions of India.

However influential racism is to Ray's sentiments toward those around him, religion plays an even greater role. For this SDO, the greatest quality of local difference and difference among locals stems from religion. Given the communal conflict boiling throughout parts of north India at this time, it would have been impossible for Ray—especially in his role as SDO—not to have noticed the differences among religious communities. Although Ray does not expect "any serious trouble" in Shahabad district[90] in contrast with other districts, he also concludes that Chainpur appears to have been more stricken by communalism than anywhere else in the sub-division and that its *thana* (police district) is a "very religious and troublesome one, and a seat of much communal trouble."[91] Indeed, when the sub-inspector of police awakens him in the middle of the night to report Hindus and Muslims clashing over a ritual procession route, Ray immediately assumes the contentious site to be in Chainpur, though in fact it is in Bhabua.[92] If current events were not reason enough to be concerned with this one village, recent history would have given Ray even more pause. In a 1908 civil case, communal tensions strained when a Muslim sued to have a site neighboring the Harsu Brahm temple declared a mosque.[93] Two decades later near the same temple (if not at the same site), a Hindu

mob of nearly two thousand had threatened to assault the *urs* (death celebration) celebrated at a Sufi tomb. Rumors had spread of a cow sacrifice there, and SDO Bakshi had narrowly averted the attack.[94] The district officer at the time suggested that both sides helped manufacture the stand-off when he emphasized that the current contestations (including the *urs* observance) were of recent origin, even though other tomb devotions there were "well established."[95] In any case, by 1940, Chainpur is among various locations where Ray attends regular conciliation committee meetings meant to minimalize communal conflicts, especially during such potentially strife-provoking holidays as Holi and Baqr Id.

Despite the communalist tension he has to confront, Ray recognizes both the differences between Hindu and Muslim groups and the complexities of conflicts among them. Sensitive to the political situation in his district and the country at large, Ray assumes that communal troubles stem from politics rather than religion, whether they center on a *tazia* caught in a neem tree[†††] during a Muharram procession or the sale of beef, relished by many Muslims but considered an abomination by many Hindus. Ray distinguishes agitators among the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha, and militant Hindus within the Congress Party, from the rest of Muslims and Hindus. For instance, he notes that Chainpur *thana* "has a number of old Muslim families scattered about in it—remnants of the days when the Pergunna of Chainpore was a Moghul stronghold. These people, although very backward and often 'touchy' and difficult to deal with—are all intensively loyal."[96]

Despite such loyalties, Ray's journal narrates the end of Britain's confident rule in India, and the tensions between British imperial membership and Indian national identity. The empire's dire financial situation impels this SDO to motor and bicycle around the sub-division, not only executing his court duties, overseeing census work, and trying to placate communalism, but also collecting for the war fund. He fumes when no resident in one locale offers more than a rupee and points out "that India had come to a pretty pass when I, an Englishman and a foreigner, had to plead with them in vain to subscribe a few rupees for the defense of their own country." Some try to assert their loyalty, which "I told them they could keep for Hitler." Ray assumes Indians should shoulder a national burden of self-protection, but fears the people in the sub-division will expect "the British Empire will see them through again," overlooking the fact that the empire's military power is heavily reliant on Indian soldiers, seamen, and airmen, as well as Indian leadership, labor, and wealth. Meanwhile, he mocks Indian expectations that they can manage their own country when their administrative abilities are so seemingly lacking. Like R. G. Hobbes before him, Ray's ethnographic comparison relies heavily on religious categories, while also reflecting the gathering importance of the category of *nation* and its hierarchicalization according to a developmental teleology. However, whereas Hobbes in the late nineteenth century projected a providence-endowed, British duty to lead India along the

[†††] A *tazia* is a towering replica of Husain's tomb in Karbala, carried in procession during Muharram, which commemorates his martyrdom. Many Hindus consider the neem tree particularly auspicious.

path to national uplift, Ray at the end of empire demonstrates the logical conundrum of Britons who justified their alien rule by enabling Indians to govern and protect their own nation, even as an emergent indigenous leadership declared that, duty done, Britons could now go home.

Despite their considerable differences and the century and a half that separates them, both Twining and Ray practiced humanist, ethnographic comparison in the exercise of their official duties, relying upon classifications both instrumental for the state and endemic among Britons. While Twining asserted his epistemic authority through descriptions of his *proximity* to Chainpur residents, Ray justified his social *distance* through scientifically ratified, racial categories. Nevertheless, both viewed religion as inherently both Indian and divisive, thus implicitly legitimating British rule.

## FRANCIS BUCHANAN (1812) AND RAM GOPAL SINGH CHOWDHARI (1917?)

> *Chainpur*.—It contains a magnificent mausoleum of Bakhtiyar Khan whose son had married a daughter of Shershah. There is also a fort surrounded by a moat. Inside the rampart there is a small Hindu shrine where Harshu Brahm is worshipped. He was a Kanaujia Brahman and priest of Raja Salivahana of that place.[97]

So begins Ram Gopal Singh Chowdhari's description of the village, less a stop along a journey than an entry in an encyclopedia. Like Twining and Ray, both Chowdhari and Francis Buchanan penned travelogues describing Chainpur among places visited and people encountered in Bihar. However, unlike Twining and Ray, this Bihari and Scot inflected their ethnographic comparisons with an encyclopedic turn. By packaging their travel experiences as gazetteers, the two travellers demonstrated the use of encyclopedic comparison even as they reflected different moments in the demand by both the government and the public for more accessibly structured information about South Asian regions and communities.

Perhaps no representation of Chainpur—or Bihar in general—proved more influential than that of Dr. Francis Buchanan[‡‡‡] (d. 1829): a bit of a surprise given that his intensely detailed surveys of Bihari and Bengali districts did not appear publicly under his own name until a century after their completion. Nevertheless, his conclusions became so authoritative in various fields and his surveys so foundational to diverse endeavors that his name appears on the current websites of the Census of India, the Archaeological Survey of India, and the Geological Survey of India. Given his role as one of the original Western zoologists, botanists, ethnographers, and archaeologists of

‡‡‡ Following his return to Scotland, Buchanan penned a variety of works under his newly assumed name, Buchanan Hamilton. He is also known as Francis Buchanan-Hamilton.

British India, were our focus on the man himself, he would warrant much more than a chapter. Instead, our much more delimited view emphasizes his representations of Chainpur and how these manifest contemporary humanist ideals of empirical ethnography among what C. A. Bayly describes as a representative of "the first generation of the new self-consciously scientific orientalists."[98]

"A Gentleman of abilities and Science, to investigate the State of Agriculture, Arts and Commerce, in the valuable Dominions acquired during the recent and former War, with the late Tipoo Sultaun."[99] With these words, Governor General Wellesley in 1800 appointed Buchanan to survey the Company's newfound south Indian empire. Buchanan the polymath—fish collector, Burma surveyor, and former ship's surgeon—far preferred employment more amenable to his botanical interests, but the governor general had more pressing needs in light of criticism about his territorial acquisitions among some of the Company's directors and the English public.[100] Buchanan's Mysore survey complete,[§§§] a new governor general not long afterward handed him an even more onerous command: survey the lands in which the Company served as the Mughals' rent collector following the Battle of Buxar (1764). Buchanan's instructions demanded he record a vast array of subjects ranging from society, history, antiquities, geology, geography, botany, zoology, and architecture (see appendix A): no small order, but one not out of keeping with the more anecdotally and travelogue-oriented scientific inquiries of the time.[101] The task would occupy entirely his next seven years and his iterations through Shahabad district alone covered about 820 miles in 118 days.[102] Although Buchanan's journals later found publication, the most influential outcome of his travels would be twenty-five folio volumes, or accounts, that provided encyclopedia-like knowledge and served as the first set of district gazetteers, albeit long unpublished, for British India.

In many ways, Buchanan's work fed both official and popular appetites for information on the subcontinent at a time when neither had much to rely upon, and did so with the authority of one who had observed all "on the spot." As the surveyor set off, he had no books to provide background for the endeavor except Rennell's *Bengal Atlas* (which, with maps scaled to about 11 miles to an inch, offered scant detail).[103] Buchanan had already offered the public some views of South Asia with published accounts of his Mysore travels and a history of Nepal. But his most elaborate labor, the Bengal and Bihar surveys (1807–1814), remained unpublished in full until the 1920s. Nevertheless, Buchanan's work became foundational for those writing on these districts as early as 1815, when Walter Hamilton's popular *East India Gazetteer* drew on it.[104] Four decades later, Edward Thornton depended almost entirely on Buchanan for parts of his four-volume gazetteer, including his Chainpur entry. A few years earlier, Robert Montgomery Martin took advantage both of the Indomaniacal fervor for Indic descriptions and of the limited availability of Buchanan's material. This prolific author on the empire—who had visited

§§§ Colin Mackenzie embarked on a more thorough survey of Mysore and neighboring regions between 1799 and 1815. Edney 1997, 175–179.

India only briefly—offered his own heavily edited version of the Buchanan material**** that both popularized it and provided the Company published versions that it distributed among its servants in India.[105]

Even unpublished, the folio accounts held enough of an authoritative reputation that some Britons consulted it in the EIC's London library while others apparently obtained copies. One Shahabad collector in 1853, when offering his copy to a superior, explained that "the best work of reference on the statistics of Shahabad Patna + Behar is Buchanan, which while it gives very minute information on points which cannot come within the scope of official correspondence, is very generally true of Manufactures + trade at present."[106] Twenty years later, in preparation for W. W. Hunter's statistical survey of Bengal, the British government despatched Buchanan's original reports and tables to Hunter in India.[107] Buchanan's work became so notable both because specialists nearly a century later still confirmed his conclusions and because he succeeded at a time when exceedingly little published information existed about Bengal.[108]

Ram Gopal Singh Chowdhari's[109] *Rambles in Bihar* (1917) expresses a hybrid sensibility similar to Buchanan's. He successfully combines at once nostalgic travelogue and data-filled gazetteer, demonstrating again how the ethnographic and encyclopedic can merge. By the twentieth century, so much had been published on the history, antiquities, and locations of Chowdhari's native province of Bihar that he could more readily synthesize materials from others to his own observations than could his predecessors. He wrote, "Since my young days travelling has been a passion to me and the days I spent in my rambles are still so many green spots in memory's waste. In these pages I have tried to reproduce my recollections with as much accuracy and correctness as possible and I have taken pains to revisit some of the important places to refresh my memory and verify the accounts which I have revised. Pieces of information and other interesting details gathered subsequently have been incorporated."[110] With this preface, Chowdhari attempts to establish his authority as both traveller and scholar. As part of a prominent Patna family and pleader in the Patna High Court,[111] he had the financial means to independently visit and revisit places throughout Bihar. Meanwhile, the celebration of Bihar by the book—which began as an article in Patna's *Express* newspaper—arose in a time when nationalist and regional political identities coalesced and Britons began to devolve some of their control to provincial assemblies. Indeed, Chowdhari was elected member to the first Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council in 1921.[112] His book demonstrates that despite rising contributions by Indians, in the early twentieth century the public information order remained dominated by British-influenced knowledge forms. But it also demonstrates the agency of Indians to appropriate and adapt these forms to fit their own interests.

Despite the impression conveyed by his book's title and preface, only a portion of Chowdhari's volume follows a conventional travelogue model (and it is not the part

**** Despite the "judicious selection" Martin exercised over the manuscript, he retained Buchanan's account of Chainpur in its entirety and also included the surveyor's sketched plan of the Mundeswari temple.

concerning Chainpur, which he may or may not have visited). While the rest of the book uses a gazetteer format—divided into districts with chapters subdivided into places—the narrative of one chapter follows an itinerary of about a week's time in 1914 when Chowdhari transited through one subdivision of his home district. The author communicates the difficulties of the journey, the "pleasing-pain" of a dangerous night journey, and the "picturesque" quality of the landscape during the monsoon. However, he complements his own experience with the knowledge imparted by others. Like many travelogues and any of the numerous gazetteers in existence by this time, Chowdhari's book draws on a myriad of sources. He refers to Buchanan and Twining as well as Hunter and archaeologist Alexander Cunningham. Describing ancient Patna, to which he dedicates much attention, Chowdhari draws equally on Faxian, Xuanzang,[††††] Strabo, Pliny, Arrian, Valmiki, and the *Mahabharat*. In contrast with his European sources, all of his South Asian ones are ancient.

Chowdhari's book uses two modes of comparison—ethnographic and encyclopedic—in ways similar to Buchanan and in a style associated particularly with gazetteers. In British India, the term "gazetteer" applied to volumes of varying format, including a very formal encyclopedic style in which comparison appeared rather random, with locations textually arranged relative to one another according to the accident of their spelling. Hence, in Thornton's 1854 gazetteer, the entry "Chynepore, or Chayanpoor" appears after "Chyluh" (a village in the North-Western Provinces) and before "Chynpore Baree" (a native state near Agra).[113] The arrangement of the references for the three sites offers the reader no advantage in her effort to understand any one of them, only a convenience in finding information about them, presumably to satisfy a curiosity piqued either by some other source or by personal experience. In contrast, Chowdhari lists Chainpur in a chapter dedicated to other Shahabad locations.

Gazetteers served as one of the most influential expressions of knowledge in British India, so Buchanan's authority and Chowdhari's appropriation leads us to their brief examination. By itself, the gazetteer—like most encyclopedic comparisons—was of little use and relied on the growing collection of materials on British India. For instance, the geographical coordinates often offered in entries (though not in *Rambles*) presumed the reader's use of a map or atlas. The British state supported, if it did not sponsor, the creation of such reference materials, as the Company did with the Thornton gazetteer[114] and the Government of India (which succeeded the Company following the 1857–1858 rebellion) did with the twenty-six-volume *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. While Thornton's work was judged by W. W. Hunter as the most influential in providing Britons with knowledge of their Indian empire,[115] by 1901 the government planned for a new imperial gazetteer in connection with the 1901 census that they would publish between 1909 and 1931.[116] This mammoth project represents both the synthesis of the huge corpus of information on

†††† While "Faxian" is often Romanized as Fa Hsien, "Xuanzang" is also portrayed as Hsuan Tsang and Hiuen Tsiang.

India published since Buchanan a century earlier and the fruition of Hunter's effort begun in 1869 to establish a methodological template for creating an all-India gazetteer.

The entries on Chainpur in the *Imperial Gazetteer* and Thornton's gazetteer five decades earlier demonstrate both common qualities in gazetteers and shifting British concerns. Both entries describe its geographical (latitude and longitude) and administrative (district and province) location, as well as its fort. Thornton repeats Buchanan to explain, "The place belongs to a family now Mussulman, but formerly professing Brahminism, having changed its profession of faith to prevent confiscation of its possessions."[117] In contrast, the *Imperial Gazetteer* gives a briefer depiction of Chainpur's rajas being expelled by the Pathans two hundred and fifty years ago, this too coming from Buchanan. Despite their mutual, uncited reliance on Buchanan, the differences between the two entries are substantial. The *Imperial Gazetteer* reflects a later British confidence in their local control as attention shifted from the genealogy and religious affiliation of the village owners to Chainpur's history and monuments. To this end, the 1909 entry writer complements Buchanan with information from a recent ASI report, again unreferenced.[‡‡‡‡] Overall, therefore, readers of the gazetteers—whether British or Indian—imbibed not only the perspectives of the European authors who provided most of the source material but also the agendas of the volume's editors.

Although Chowdhari heavily relied on a gazetteer for his representation of Chainpur and other parts of Bihar, he exercised discretion over what to include and what not. All the information—and at times even the wording—for the author's description of Chainpur derives from a British-edited gazetteer for Shahabad,[§§§§] just as Hunter's description of Chainpur simply reworded Buchanan's while offering bare acknowledgement.[118] Of the thirteen locations Chowdhari describes in Shahabad district, eight demonstrate the same deep indebtedness to this gazetteer (including the description of the Mundeswari temple), though in other locations, Chowdhari exercises more independence in description. Even when he does borrow, the author does so with selective deliberation, as seen in his poaching of the gazetteer's material on Chainpur. In keeping with his Hindu (and Brahman) focus, he reduces four sentences in the original describing Bakhtiyar Khan and his tomb to one, excludes materials on other Muslim tombs and the Jama mosque, and focuses the majority of the text on the narrative of the henpecked raja and the vengeful Kanaujiya Brahman (see chapter 6). The combination of borrowing and discretion demonstrates the agency Indians continued to exercise while operating within British epistemic hegemony.

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‡‡‡‡ *Imperial Gazetteer* 1909–1931, 10:121. The entry also states "A mosque built as a tomb over Fateh Khan, who married a daughter of the emperor Sher Shah, is still in good condition." This apparently confuses Akhtiar/Bakhtiyar Khan, identified by Buchanan and later authors as resident of the mausoleum, with his son who became Sher Shah's son-in-law.

§§§§ In fact, this was the first dedicated gazetteer for Shahabad district: L. S. S. O'Malley, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers: Shahabad* (1906). See O'Malley 2005 (1924), 1.

Although both Chowdhari and Buchanan describe Chainpur—and Bihar in general—with a primary reliance on categories of religion, their approaches diverge significantly. Buchanan's *Account of Shahabad* expresses his emphasis on religion simply enough with one of the longest chapters both dedicated to the topic and divided between "The Muhammedans" and "The Hindus." Caste provides the organizing principle for each of these sections, demonstrating how for Buchanan—and many of his contemporaries—caste primarily represented a subclassification of religion. Throughout his account, Buchanan qualifies most rulers as either Hindu or Muslim and tends to identify the caste for major landholders, rulers, and their advisors, reflecting a contemporary government view that religion and caste defined the local politics it sought to master.[119]

Despite the evident primacy of religion and caste as comparative categories, Buchanan's attitudes toward Hindus and Muslims are nevertheless not straightforward. While he tends to focus on their practices more than their beliefs, he avoids the condemnation of their rituals repeated by many contemporaries.[120] Buchanan pays particular attention to Hindu traditions, giving repeated consideration to temples. During his survey, he often visits a village motivated only by an interest in a reputed temple or image, paying little or no attention to the locale's inhabitants or their habitation while meticulously recording the name of the temple's principal deity. His fascination seems undiminished upon his return to Scotland, where he would publish a book on Hindu genealogy that he considered "intended by a rude science, following the way of allegory, to explain the origin of plants, animals and meteors, and the motions of the heavenly bodies." He apparently printed at least fifty copies at his own expense and distributed them to British public libraries.[121] Such dedication notwithstanding, on occasion the surveyor indulges in sardonic comment regarding certain Hindus, such as when he describes sannyasis and Brahmans as dupers.[122]

Buchanan's descriptions of Muslims are equally mixed. They draw far less attention in Buchanan's Shahabad journal and account than Hindus. He mentions some mosques but few *dargah*s (Sufi shrines). Like Twining, much of his interpretation of what he saw molds to the common bifurcated vision of Indian history animated by marauding Muslims and Hindu victims. Hence, when visiting one locale, Buchanan takes local reverence for a ruined building's foundation as the sole evidence for his conclusion "that there had been here some temple which had probably been destroyed by the Muhammadan invaders, and the images thrown into the tank." Elsewhere, while attempting to account for the missing *murti* (devotional sculpture) of a temple near a mosque, he presumes that the association of the mosque to Aurangzeb provides explanation enough to decide that the Mughal emperor destroyed the *murti* as prelude to founding the mosque.*****

***** Buchanan leaves unanswered why the fabled temple destroyer would destroy the *murti* yet leave the temple erect while building his mosque in front of it. A later Archaeological Survey of India report that describes both the temple and mosque ascribes the Aurangzeb association to hearsay. Bloch 1904b, 59.

Nevertheless, the surveyor occasionally challenges such assumptions as when, in another Shahabad location, he suspects that images said to have been broken by Aurangzeb actually were damaged long before.[123] Equally as complex are the forty-two colored paintings he commissioned of Bihari clothing that, like his verbal descriptions of dress in Shahabad,[124] Buchanan divides into Hindu and Muslim. Yet, he recognizes that some members of the presumably distinct communities share similarities in clothing, especially among the least privileged classes.[125] Buchanan notes other details that occasionally challenge popular assumptions regarding Bihar's bifurcated society. These include that Hindus made a number of the Muharram processional towers in Shahabad, and that some Muslims seemed to adopt Hindu devotional forms by calling themselves *bhakt*[†††††] worshippers and wearing strings of wooden beads.[126] Hence, some of Buchanan's visual and verbal images imply the possibility of overlap among Hindus and Muslims.

Such possibilities do not appear in Chowdhari's *Rambles in Bihar*. Throughout the book, when he does describe individuals, the author tends to identify (with mutual exclusion) Hindus according to caste, Muslims as Muslims, and Britons by personal name yet without association to religion or any other group. Chowdhari's attention primarily fixes on Hindu religious sites, with some comment on historic relics. Mosques and *dargah*s seldom appear. Hence, his Chainpur entry begins with a single line regarding Bakhtiyar Khan's mausoleum, then describes the fort as a brief prelude to a long narration of the Harsu Brahm and Raja Salivahan story, before concluding with the observation (using William Crooke's words) that the *brahm*'s worship is "rapidly spreading." In contrast, Buchanan distributes his descriptions of Chainpur among various topical sections. Mention of Harsu Brahm finds its way into the chapter on religion, as does reference to particular politically dominant castes (Chauban Rajputs and Sikarwar Rajputs) of the area. The education chapter refers to the village's specific form of Bhojpuri. Elsewhere, Buchanan dedicates seven pages to Chainpur that he orients around political history, archaeological remains, and places of worship.

Chowdhari, on the other hand, attends primarily to Hindu people and places, imbuing his descriptions with a dual sense of Hindu beleaguerment and pride, while offering Chainpur a single entry. Descriptions of various sites provide an occasion to relate the oppression and/or valor of local Hindus against non-Hindus. For example, the author gives a long description of a place where a Brahman "martyr" died resisting the expansion of Buddhism. Chowdhari concludes, "It was owing to devout men like the Pundit that Sanatan Dharma (orthodox Hinduism) was preserved in tact even when Buddhism was made the State religion by Asoka and other Shudra emperors of India [*sic*]."[127] In addition to other occasional aspersions aimed at low castes, a certain antipathy to a seemingly monolithic Muslim presence also appears. So, for instance, Chowdhari notes that one particular city served as the seat of "the Muhammedan government" in Bihar from 1200

[†††††] A term of Sanskrit origin referring to devotional worship.

to 1541, collapsing into an undifferentiated and Hindu-antagonistic whole the multiple states that succeeded one another throughout this period.[128] While his references to "Buddhist times" and the "Mahomedan period" accord with contemporary European nomenclature, the author never mentions "Hindu governments" or a "Hindu period" as most Britons would, implying that Bihar is inherently Hindu. This represents a Hindu normativity that parallels the Christian normativity of British narratives, in which the periods of purportedly Hindu and Muslim rule are followed by British—not Christian—rule.

At the time that Chowdhari wrote, this sense of Hindu normativeness and victimhood coupled with allegations of Muslim insensitivity and oppression helped fuel a communalism in Bihar that soon reached a violent apex. During the Bakr Id riots of 1917, Hindu mobs looted more than a hundred villages, burned many houses and mosques, and raped untold numbers of women in Shahabad district.[129] Although disputes about cow sacrifice nominally sparked the conflagration, it clearly had political overtones since the affected areas coincided with those supportive of the 1857 rebels, and cries of "The rule of the English is over" and "Victory to the Germans" rang out.[130] The lieutenant governor formally declared parts of Gaya and Shahabad districts (though not Chainpur) to be in a "disturbed" state.[131] Thus, it does not surprise us that Chowdhari shares with Buchanan (as well as Twining, Ray, and the Daniells) a sense of an historical Hindu and Muslim antipathy, yet does not recognize the possibility of comparative similarities among these social categories that Twining and Buchanan entertained.

Both authors qualify their works through assertions of their "on the spot" qualities. Nevertheless, Buchanan's empirical urge carries him further than Chowdhari's does, as he attempts to reconcile local narratives with his historiographical sensibilities and available, observable evidence. Hence, Buchanan describes what area residents call the Mundeswari temple and wonders both about its connection to Chainpur's name and whether the associated puranic legend has any empirical foundation. On the basis of reports by a painter and pandit whom he despatched there, he suggests locals might wrongly associate the Mundeswari temple with the goddess of that name because there exists an inscription to Mundeswar, another name for Shiv. Similarly, he offers his own critical assessment of a local narrative regarding the caste group previously dominant in Chainpur (see chapter 6). This leads to an evaluation of the narrative regarding "Sarivahan Raja" and the *brahm*'s revenge, followed by descriptions of this ghost's contemporary temple and the area's Suri-era architecture that attests to Muslim invasion. Buchanan blends empiricism with skepticism as he critiques both the profit that the *brahm*'s priest makes from distressed visitors to the temple and the preference of the mausoleum's caretaker to attend, instead, to a Sufi tomb "for a dead saint is often much better than a living one, and worth a hundred dead lords." At other times, the surveyor forfeits observation for truism. For example, he uncritically prefers the trope of Muslim invasion and iconoclasm to actual observation when he claims that Chainpur area Pathans "have eradicated the objects of idolatrous worship,"[132] despite

the presence of several old temples in the village at this time. This example of deductive reasoning will be echoed in Ray's future surrender to the received stereotype of Indian indifference to animals after a single experience that undermines his accumulated personal experience.

Chowdhari, too, relies on received truths that appear to undermine his "on the spot" derived authority. He notes that Patna's visitors included epic figures like Ram, Lakshman, Krishna, Bhimsen, and Arjuna. Although this might tempt us to characterize his book as theocentric in the manner that Bowley and Leupolt's journals were Christocentric, the more fitting parallel would be with those humanist travellers considered in this chapter who expressed Christian sentiments without making their works Christocentric. They, like Chowdhari, uncritically acknowledged the role of divinity in human history without fashioning their ethnographies around theology, as was the case for Bowley, Leupolt, Heber, and Hobbes. Hence, the author's many invocations of "God almighty" notwithstanding, Chowdhari's *Rambles* takes social qualities—not nearness to a deity—as its basis of human comparison. Muslims are disparaged not because of their theological commitments or ritual practices but because of their supposed antipathy to Hindus.

Despite his divergences from Buchanan and other British humanist travel writers, Chowdhari's choices reflect the hegemony Europeans enjoyed in describing and explaining Chainpur and north India. While the travel writer may have edited the material about Chainpur that he borrowed from the Bihar and Orissa district gazetteer, he also has incorporated some of the gazetteer's perspectives, as well as material that it in turn borrowed from William Crooke and the Archaeological Survey of India. By not citing these sources for his description, Chowdhari both follows common gazetteer practice *and* preempts any critical local reflection on this as British-generated information. And by suggesting this material to derive from personal observation taken during his travels, the author confirms its conclusions, perhaps without any actual empirical observation of his own. Meanwhile, *Rambles* reasserts British hegemony by omission as well, drawing on no published Indian authority postdating antiquity. Although Indians participated substantially in the work of many Europeans like Buchanan, Cunningham, and Crooke, their names and contributions are eclipsed by the authority of the Westerner whose name alone gets cited in later works, such as Chowdhari's. One need not flip many pages of *Rambles in Bihar* to feel the weight of British authority, both political and epistemic. Immediately following the title page is Chowdhari's dedication of his work to Edward Albert Gait, lieutenant governor of Bihar and Orissa, replete with pictures of him and his wife. After his brief preface, the author includes an introduction written by E. H. C. Walsh, member of the Board of Revenue and vice president of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society. While Walsh's comments are generally appreciative of the author's work, occasionally they become terse, as he openly disagrees with some of Chowdhari's historical arguments, particularly those in which Chowdhari contests claims made by European authorities.

Six decades before Chowdhari published his work, Bholanauth Chunder also authored a travelogue that he prefaced with a European's authoritative words. Although Chunder's Bihar travels did not take him through Chainpur, a comparison of his work with Chowdhari's proves instructive in regard to Indian perspectives and European authority. Like Chowdhari's travelogue, Chunder's *Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India* (1869) began as a set of installments (1846–1866) in *Saturday Evening Englishman*, a Calcutta newspaper.[133] Its author, a Bengali from Calcutta who graduated from Hindu College and belonged to the Asiatic Society of Bengal (ASB), then published the volume in London (although he contemplated translating the work into Bengali, he does not seem to have done so).[134] Like Chowdhari, Chunder too refers to the picturesque, references Greek and Roman mythology, shows an Islamophobic reflex, and overwhelmingly relies upon European sources.[135] However, in contrast with his predecessor, Chunder not only appreciates various Hindu achievements at many of the sites that he visits, he also debunks or rationalizes narratives that he finds too incredible. Moreover, he critiques Brahman backwardness and falsification. Of the generic Brahman, he concludes, "His vaunted learning, instead of being a qualification, is now his positive disqualification. It does not enable a man to shake off political servitude, to develope [*sic*] the resources of his country, to extend commerce, to navigate the seas, to construct railroads, and to communicate from Calcutta to London."[136] Preceding Hobbes and Ray by decades, Chunder's words evidence the emergence of a nationalist developmental teleology that views (Indian) religion as a retardant.

While he admires British rule, Chunder also finds occasion to criticize it. Nevertheless, he decides to invite J. Talboys Wheeler, a noted historian of India, to write an introduction that will, as Wheeler put it, "assure the reader that the Baboo is a veritable Hindoo, and the author of the entire work."[137] In an odd testimonial, Wheeler describes the author as a Deist devoted to Krishna, who believes in all Hindu gods, yet despises idolatry and superstition.[138] In contrast with Walsh, who bristled at Chowdhari's counterarguments against European authorities, Wheeler positions Chunder as a superior authority *because* of his divergence from certain Western views. "European readers must be generally aware of the limited character and scope of the information which is to be obtained from the ordinary run of European travellers in India; the descriptions, often very graphic, of external life; the appreciation of the picturesque in external nature; the perception of the ludicrous in Native habits, manners, and sentiments; and a moral shrug of the shoulders at all that is strange, unintelligible, or idolatrous:–all, however, combined with an utter want of real sympathy with the people, or close and familiar acquaintance with their thoughts and ways."[139] Wheeler, therefore, views Chunder's travelogue as a necessary corrective to Western apartness. Although Wheeler's characterization of Chunder as "but a fair type of the enlightened class of English-educated Bengalee gentlemen"[140] might have been a patronizing preference for the "brown-skinned Englishmen" that Thomas Babbington Macaulay hoped to create through English education, Wheeler's overall preference for Chunder's work over that of most European travelogues cannot be

overlooked. While Chunder, like Chowdhari, cites various European sources, his travelogue appears to truly testify to his experiences and not simply reword and reiterate Western works. On the strength of this, Wheeler promotes the Bengali as the ultimate authority in Indian travel writing: a positioning that reveals *both* Wheeler's public endorsement of an Indian's authorship *and* Wheeler's authority—presumed by Chunder and him—to declare it so. Therefore, despite the differences between Chunder's travelogue and Chowdhari's travelogue-*cum*-gazetteer, both authors turned to British epistemic authorities to write prefaces qualifying their works as empirically legitimate.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, therefore, these travellers attested to several features of the humanist ethnographic paradigm while also demonstrating changes taking place over a century and a half. For all of them, observable data (architecture, narrations, relics) provided the evidence while those who have collected this data *and analyzed it according to a recognized discipline* represented the authoritative voice about them. Hence, no author named their local informants and only one identified the native assistants who helped collect information. Unusual among travel writers, Buchanan credited the work of "the Pandit of the survey," Ramajai Batacharji to his surveying, drawing, and collecting.[141] On the first page of his account of Nepal (the borders of which he surveyed following the Bengal surveys), Buchanan describes him as "an intelligent Brahman, from Calcutta, whom I employed to obtain information, so far as I prudently could, without alarming a jealous government, or giving offence to the Resident, under whose authority I was acting."[142] Elsewhere, the surveyor acknowledged another Indian—an unnamed painter from his party—as responsible for making both the plan of the Mundeswari temple and the drawings of its features.[143] Even in these few cases, the actual analysis remained in the European's voice, not an Indian's, and it is the European's name that readers would almost assuredly associate with the material. Paraphrasing Edward Said, in European imperial situations, natives primarily served as sources of *data*, while Westerners acted as sources of *knowledge*,[144] although we shall soon see examples of when Indians participated more influentially in the production of knowledge.

In the case of visitors to Chainpur, the "methodical manipulation of difference" that Smith posits as essential to comparison shifted over time, showing how British (and Indian) comparative efforts changed, in accord with the crystallization of new disciplines and other developments. Despite the common ethnographic approach taken by each traveller, new forms of comparison offered readers different avenues by which to access the data. Hence, Buchanan and Chowdhari complemented their ethnographies with encyclopedic forms of comparison. Buchanan infused his work with statistical comparisons, while Ray may have implicitly drawn from the evolutionary mode. However, what did not change was a British emphasis on religious difference.

Unfortunately, neither Fanny Parks nor Emily Eden—nor any other woman traveller—left an account of a visit to Chainpur. Had they had access to some of the village's women, as they had to women at different points during their respective journeys, they might have offered different representations of the village that diverged from what their male counterparts provided. Yet more than gender limits the representations that we have of Chainpur. Given that their linguistic skills restricted most of these travellers to conversations in Hindustani, Bangla, Persian, and/or English, they likely were unable to converse with the vast majority of Chainpur residents who had no formal education and spoke only Bhojpuri. Even the indigenous assistants with whom many Europeans traveled may not have had linguistic access. So for instance, Ramajai, the Calcutta-born aide to Buchanan, would not likely have spoken Bhojpuri. Other social dynamics created additional limits on what travellers could understand. Travellers working for the government tended to seek out village officials and zamindars to answer their various questions and satisfy their provisional needs. Engaging religious issues, travellers often turned first to ritual specialists, like the *purohit*s of Harsu Brahm's temple, and not to common devotees. Hence, in the effort to demonstrate how Indians participated in and resisted travellers' attempts to know Chainpur, we necessarily recognize that few area residents garnered the attention of the travellers in the first place and, thus, few had the opportunity to respond on their own terms.

One might have expected that, as increasing numbers of Indians gained the English education that could allow them to more easily engage British audiences, their observations—based on a lifetime of on-the-spot experience of India and Indians—would accrue them ocular authority in British minds. Although the works of Chunder and, to a lesser degree, Chowdhari demonstrate that this was true for some such Indians, it was not so for most. By the late nineteenth century, increased access to Britain for British officials in India, heightened transportation and communication among Britons outside the capital cities, and a rising ability to have families with British wives diminished—but did not extinguish—the likelihood of Britons intermingling with their Indian charges, as the difference between Twining and Ray's accounts suggests. The perception of racial difference decreased interest in Indian perspectives for many Britons, as did the growing number of English-language publications about India. Meanwhile, as the British military and political position solidified toward the end of the nineteenth century, many Britons in India gravitated toward an evolutionary comparison that justified both their inherently undemocratic and violent rule as well as their increasing social and genetic isolation. Throughout these changes, Indians remained a primarily religious people in the minds of most Britons.

These travelogues—whether pictorial or textual—helped British and Indian audiences envision Chainpur and other parts of India. In doing so, they invited distant audiences into the humanist, empirical enterprise of knowing Chainpur even if they had not visited there themselves. Herein lay the seeds of anthropology, a discipline premised (in part, anyway) on the presumption of direct—dare we say "on the spot"?—observation of individuals and their communities. Ultimately, cultural anthropologists with their deep descriptions would provide the latest iteration of the humanist travelogue, albeit both

circumscribed within a more constrained landscape and embossed with the scientistic stamp of scientific method, as we shall see more clearly in chapter 6. Meanwhile, the British state sought to democratize the ocular authority practiced by the travellers considered here. Many of the latter engaged in sketching and collecting in ways that presaged the establishment of both the Archaeological Survey of India and the myriad museums on the subcontinent, which made relics, artifacts, and samples from diverse locations available to the Indian public, as chapter 7 will describe.

# Third Theoretical Interlude

## CLASSIFICATION IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES

THE PREVIOUS THEORETICAL interludes have explored the dynamics of comparison, the qualities of medieval Christian classifications, and five modes of comparison. The final step for understanding how acts of classification by the British Indian state and various individuals could so profoundly alter indigenous perspectives requires an examination of the specific qualities of taxonomy associated with modern, Western-originated science. The reliance on this classification model represents yet another sign of the increasing dominance of the positivist and empirical paradigm that gradually displaced so many other ways of knowing the natural world while increasingly eclipsing previous South Asian paradigms for knowing humanity.

### THE PREEMINENCE OF BIOLOGICAL TAXONOMY

Those who have argued against discontinuities between pre-British and British enumerations have been correct in emphasizing how Britons hardly pioneered attention to caste and religion as social classifications, but they overlook not only the quality of classes used by modern Britons, but also the difference in what the act of classification itself meant for them. As already noted, classification is inherent in every form of knowledge. Carpenters, wet nurses, physicians, and botanists all require the ability to differentiate between items for both their own recognition and their ability to communicate with others. Modern scientific taxonomies diverged from their predecessors in both the West and South Asia

because Europeans considered classification systems to do more than just arbitrarily order knowledge: they served *as a form of knowledge themselves*.

Crafting a list of the animals outside my home serves as a classificatory activity since it groups diverse individuals into categories. Hence, I see sparrows, finches, and hawks and list them as "birds," among other categories of animals: humans, rabbits, snake, squirrels. Organizing their names alphabetically helps order the animals for easier reference. But the taxonomic systems developed to serve first botany and then most other disciplines strove toward an ordering more ambitious than this. Most of the major taxonomists immediately following the Enlightenment believed that a suitable classification system would expose an inherent relational system among all species in nature. This helps explain the concerted urge among nineteenth-century European botanists to classify *all* plants, not just ones that seemed particularly beautiful or were pertinent to practical industrial and pharmaceutical interests. To overlook one plant might mean missing a part of the overall order (like overlooking a piece of a jigsaw puzzle), which might mean missing a link between two families of plants and, thus, lead to the obscuration of their relation to another. This assumption, in turn, presumed both that a "natural" taxonomy was by definition a universal one and the possibility of a totalistic view of all living beings.[1]

The taxonomies that won European acceptance at this time—and upon which we often rely in our own—exhibited three standards for classification that sociologist Kenneth Bailey has identified. The prominence of these standards in British censuses of India illustrates how the Enlightenment's taxonomic qualities gradually displaced the presuppositions of Mughal and other pre-British enumerations, especially once the census gained value in Indian political discourse. A fictive counter example—Jorge Luis Borges's sardonically imagined "Chinese encyclopedia"—provides useful negative examples for each of Bailey's three standards, plus one more.

> On those remote pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from a distance.[2]

If we sense a classificatory outrageousness in Borges's description, it only demonstrates our innate expectation for the following taxonomic rules.

(1) Classification categories should be as distinct as possible, ideally allowing no overlap between groups whose individual members must be, in some way, homogeneous.[3] Obviously, many of Borges's categories overlap since all animals that "belong to the Emperor" might fit any other category as well. Although it would change with the advent of evolutionary thought, early nineteenth-

century taxonomies assumed that each individual could be identified as belonging to one specific class because of some unchanging, *essential* quality or qualities that defined that class.

(2) The characteristics that define each classification must be nontrivial.[4] This parallels Jonathan Z. Smith's point already noted in the first theoretical interlude that comparison—and classifications are inherently comparative—relies on some interesting difference. It is difficult to imagine a circumstance that would make a quality such as trembling as if mad such a useful characteristic that a taxon would be dedicated to it.

(3) The classes must be exhaustive, encompassing all items that one intends to classify.[5] Borges's "others" category cheats on this rule by offering a classification defined in no way except that it contains those that have not yet been classified. For instance, ornithologists would not appear terribly diligent if they provided every species of bird a unique taxon except for a dozen or so that they simply classified as "other." Not only would this failure in classification make us wonder how some birds defied the taxonomical abilities of scientists and how these birds relate to others, it would put into doubt the entire taxonomical system, which we expect should not be flummoxed by a dozen outliers.

(4) This hints at a larger expectation that Bailey does not identify: not only must each category be defined by nontrivial qualities, the entire classificatory system must evince a meaningfulness. Borges's whimsical account delights in part because of its evident impracticality that is rooted in its overall randomness. Although some might consider their taxonomical systems meaningful because the classifications appear self-evident—for instance, inherent in nature—all taxonomies are socially constructed.* Hence the divergent categories and systems of organization used by Mughal administrator Abul Fazl Allami, the Marwari home minister Munhata Nainsi, and the East India Company surveyor Alexander Boileau (whom we shall meet in the next chapter), are neither natural nor chosen randomly, and thus reflect some of the assumptions of their societies. Together, each systems and its set of categories point toward what Bailey calls a "key"—a basic logic included in every classification system—that opens the system to meaning and understanding.[6] The key provides both the logic for determining what categories are established and the organizing principle for the relationships among the categories.

While historian and anthropologist Norbert Peabody has usefully demonstrated the continuities between certain pre-British and British enumerative strategies by highlighting

* While Carolus Linnaeus and many others among his contemporaries disagreed, the great naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc Buffon declared "nothing really exists in nature except individuals…since genera, orders, and classes exist only in our imaginations." As quoted in Foucault 1994 (1966),146–147.

a similar assumption of caste as a classification, he overlooks the specific qualities that different states supposed of their classificatory categories. It is to modern European scientific taxonomy that we must look to understand the key of Boileau's census efforts—and those of later British projects—and how in certain ways they differed fundamentally from the pre-British enumerations about which we know. A description of how European classifications of nature coalesced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries sets the story for how they gradually displaced many, if not most, South Asian classifications of society.

Perhaps the European best known in regard to classification is Carolus Linnaeus (d. 1778). As the eighteenth-century founder of the basis for the taxonomic systems continuing to serve biological sciences that originated in Europe and have become globally normative, Linnaeus established one of the most enduring and well-known systems of classification. He built on the notion of species founded by John Ray (d. 1705). Before then, the works of the ancient authors Theophrastus, Aristotle, and Pliny the Elder dominated European botanical classification as most authoritative. However, in the sixteenth century, botanists challenged this supremacy, outlined the classic authors' errors, and sought to remedy these by switching to a classification system based on alphabetic order. The solution did not prove very practical. In the words of commentators describing a book organized this way, "those knowing the name of the plant did not require the book, [while] those not knowing the name couldn't use it."[7] The failure of this system demonstrates how mere ordering does not necessarily instill meaning or utility.

Ray stood out from myriad competitors looking for a practical organizing method when he classified plants as a single species if they, as a set of individuals, "give rise through reproduction to new individuals similar to themselves." Ray's adoption of the term "species" from the Latin word *specere* "to see" reflects his understanding that observation and inductive reasoning should determine what individuals get included within a species.[8] In contrast, the deductive, Aristotelian logic that we have already encountered as at the heart of the medieval Christian classification of humanity was based on an a priori criterion derived from Christian doctrine: similarity or dissimilarity to established beliefs. Instead, Ray's system relied on empirical observation as the basis for determining which specimens to include in a species.[†] The difference was meaningful. If a lion is defined as an animal with a mane, then a lioness is not a lion. If, however, one observes a lion and lioness mate and produce cubs that grow into lions and lionesses, then one can conclude that the lion and lioness belong to the same species. Observation becomes key, then, in classifying species that may have progeny that differ in appearance from one another. Based on the last interlude's discussion of modes of comparison, we recognize that the key to Ray's (and Linnaeus's) system was morphology.

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† Both the derivation of the term *specimen* from *specere* and its origins in the seventeenth century as a word implying experimentation, model, example, and type aptly demonstrates the heightened emphasis on visual evidence among many Anglophones.

Linnaeus gave greater depth to Ray's system as he grouped similar species into larger, nested taxonomic classifications. Similarity in reproduced form, as Ray had initially proposed in his plant taxonomy, stood as the key to understanding his system. Linneaus's biological taxonomy took all living beings as an enormous field of entities that were, therefore, sorted into genus (e.g., *Felis)* according to a common trait or set of traits (e.g., feline characteristics). Linnaeus refined this taxonomical system when he later devised a binomial scheme by which a particular plant or animal was identified with two Latinized names: genus and species (e.g., *Homo sapiens*).[9] Based on observation, some species could be grouped together as a genus, the next classification level, in order to demonstrate the commonality of at least one characteristic they shared despite variations in other qualities. The binomial system declared both levels simultaneously. After Linnaeus, scientific nomenclature would continue to add nested levels of classification to more effectively include all specimens until they now number seven (species, genus, family, order, class, phylum, and kingdom).

These hierarchical levels of classification both eased the management of myriad species and offered multiple levels of focus by which to manage different levels of relationships. Hence, rather than a scientist facing perhaps a thousand species in a certain locale, she deals with one hundred species of birds, one hundred of land animals, and eight hundred of insects. A civil official concerned with malaria will be calmed to determine that among all insect species, only two carry the disease and both belong to the family Culicidae (mosquitoes). Hoping to devise a mosquito-control campaign, he may examine the order to which Culicadae belongs, Diptera (two-winged flies), to see whether a predator successful against other two-winged flies might also work against their cousins, the mosquitoes. This hope relies on an expected relationship between all members of the order and, hence, he does not look for commonalities with members of other insect orders. Moreover, because Diptera and Culicidae can be found on other continents, the relations of mosquitoes to predators of two-winged flies elsewhere might be illuminative for the local situation. All of this relies on the Linnaean ideal of a universal schema that can catalog not just the living creatures of his native Sweden, nor simply of Europe, but potentially and preferably of anywhere on the planet, befitting the totalizing view inherent in scientism. Hence, a cougar found in North America could be recognized as sharing the genus Felis with the Royal Bengal Tiger despite the fact the half the world separates their ranges. The principles his system instantiated would be applied to taxonomies serving a variety of disciplines, including those focused on the social world. An example from British India will help illustrate not only these features of European-originated taxonomy, but also its intersection with empire.

## AN ATTRACTIVE BENGALI FISH AND FRANCIS BUCHANAN

Upon returning home and assuming a new name, East India Company servant Francis Buchanan—who, as mentioned last chapter, provided the first systematic British surveys

of most Bengali and Bihari districts—published *An Account of the Fishes Found in the River Ganges and Its Branches* (1822). The volume culminated decades of informal fish collecting that Buchanan pursued as a break from his various duties to the Company. These had included not only executing statistical surveys in Mysore and Bengal and serving as the superintendent for the Company's botanic garden at Calcutta, but also acting as director to the Natural History Project of India that was charged with describing, illustrating, and classifying all of the subcontinent's quadrupeds and birds. Much to Buchanan's disappointment, a new, budget-conscious governor general axed the latter endeavor.[10] Throughout his service in Burma, Mysore, Nepal, Bengal, and Bihar, Buchanan worked on his collection of plants and animals—gathering, describing, and drawing specimens—just as he had done in Scotland, where he particularly had given himself over to the collection of mosses.[11] In India, he relied upon local fishermen to help him collect, and rued the realization during his yearlong posting in Nepal that "fishing is not a favourite art among the people of that country, so that my opportunities of investigation were not great."[12]

It is worth emphasizing how the collecting, writing, and classifying of Buchanan and other naturalists ultimately may have served imperial interests but were not necessarily motivated by them. As noted above, Buchanan engaged in his naturalist pursuits long before his Company employment and continued them both on voyages away from India and upon resettlement back in Scotland. He gave attention both to fish that had no commercial value and to those that did. Demonstrating that he viewed these activities as apart from his Company duties, Buchanan was seriously nettled as he prepared to retire that the governor general refused his request to present his specimen drawings in London. He hoped his collection would be maintained with the rest of his collections in the city so, after his retirement, he could readily access them. While he viewed them as his own property, the government determined that the descriptions belonged to it because they had been executed during the Bengal survey. He shot a letter back explaining that his drawings did little to complement his survey report and that his offer to leave them in London derived from his effort of "rendering them useful to science."[13] In the manuscript for *Fishes*, the author railed against the governor general's actions as "one of those mean exertions of power, into which a weak man thrust into high authority is liable to fall."[14] Prudently, he excluded this from the published version. Despite such protests regarding his ownership of his drawings, Buchanan recognized nevertheless how his political position enabled his collecting. While on the Mysore survey he complained that "I had no authority to call upon any of the natives for information and assistance and, without that, it is impossible to procure the most trifling thing."[15] Although he hoped to serve both the EIC and "science," Buchanan understood how one made the other possible.

Buchanan shared contemporary naturalists' urges toward universal classification, and viewed his taxonomical effort as serving both local and transnational interests. Although practical considerations played some role in his explorations, he provided far more detail for utility-less specimens than practicality required. Take for example a small fish brought

to his attention. The small, minnow-like fish piqued his interest because of the vivid blue stripes along its diminutive silvery sides. He gave it the species name *rerio* and registered it as a member of the *Cyprinus* genus. But then Buchanan made an interesting decision. Recognizing that Bengalis called this and a number of other minnow-like fish *Dhani*, he decided to create a sub-genus called *Cyprinus danio* that would include them all. Thus, he accommodated an indigenous classificatory system to the Linnaean.[16] This choice reflected Buchanan's larger efforts to negotiate various discursive worlds. In another example, Buchanan included in his account of the Mysore survey an index that intended, among other goals, to help Europeans learn the Indian words he employed.[17] In the surviving folios of his Gangetic fish, illustrations portray each fish at the center of a page with the Latin binomial name on one side and the indigenous name written in both Bengali and English transliteration on the other. On various occasions when naming a fish previously unknown to Europeans, Buchanan drew on these indigenous terms[18] (though on at least one occasion he named a genus after a friend: *Roxburghia*).[19] Overall, Buchanan sought to create "names greatly more polished than the sesquipedalian compounds of the modern dealers in greek [*sic*]."[20] Nevertheless, he adapted each name to the requisite Latin form. Although the author wrote most of *Fishes* in English "for the sake of my countrymen residing on the banks of the Ganges," he included a synopsis of the entire work in Latin—Index Methodicus—intended for "those men of science to whom English is not familiar."[21] Hence, Buchanan transformed local knowledge to address both a regional British audience and an increasingly global "scientific" community.

While taxonomy represented an imperative for Buchanan, he did not presume that any particular system self-evidently worked best. Reflecting the classificatory tumult of his times, in the introduction to *Fishes* he admitted his struggle to determine the best key by which to taxonomically arrange the fish he catalogued. Buchanan drew on the systems of both Linnaeus and naturalist Comte de La Cépedè. While he considered the latter more complete, Buchanan thought La Cépedè's reliance on the distinctions among gill-covers and membranes too difficult to use in practice. Later, he admitted that he wished he had known of the zoologist Georges Cuvier's work before completing the manuscript.[22] Instead of the multiple qualities with which Buchanan qualified a species, Cuvier relied on only a few, greatly simplifying the process. Throughout, the effort to determine which specimens belonged within a species badgered him (as it does taxonomists to this day). Buchanan's struggle, and his reliance on indigenous and European sources, was evident as he lamented about two bulbuls he observed, "These two birds called by the same name differ very much in appearance. It is as yet uncertain whether or not they are male and female, distinct species, or the same species at different seasons. Mr. Gibbons seems to be of the first opinion, the most intelligent natives with whom I have conversed are of the second opinion, and the third is hinted at by Mr. Johnson surgeon of allahabad [*sic*]."[23] Hence, overall Buchanan recognized the practical requirements of naturalist taxonomies even as he sought to contribute to the effort to classify all animals and plants. In pursuit of the latter, he relied on Europeans and Indians for both information and taxa. However,

as we shall see later, Buchanan did not demonstrate doubts about the taxonomy by which many contemporary Britons understood Indian societies.

Ultimately, Francis Buchanan's experiences with the *Dhani* of Bengal and many other species bears out both Jonathan Z. Smith and Kenneth Bailey's arguments. When the surveyor encountered a plant or animal in Scotland, India, and elsewhere that caught his attention, he postulated a difference that he considered interesting (even when it came to moss) and sought to methodically manipulate it by categorically situating it according to the taxonomical system coalescing among Western-originated sciences. Following specific rules, he created distinct, nontrivial taxons that fit into a meaningful system intended to classify any creature. The totalizing ambition of this universality sought not only to serve Europeans anywhere in the world or even to account for every type of living being, but also to be intelligible to members of any culture. These Enlightenment taxonomical aspirations mirrored the European imperial visions that coalesced at the same time. Meanwhile, religion decreasingly informed the episteme that taxonomies served and increasingly became just another metacategory divisible into mutually exclusive taxons.

The same may be said of the Muhammadans, whose long residence among the Hindús, and their being in a considerable number converts from Hindúism, keeps up among them most of the Hindú habits and customs, with trifling variations. Indeed, excepting the rules of inheritance, in her occupation and model of life the Muhammadan female does not much differ from the Hindú, although among the Muhammadans marriage takes place at a little more advanced age; but the proportion in the age of the wife and the husband is not materially different.

—ANONYMOUS, as quoted by W. C. Plowden (1869)

# 5

# Categories to Count On

## RELIGION AND CASTE IN THE CENSUS

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THIS PASSAGE FROM W. C. Plowden,[1] in which he "quotes with the apparent acquiescence the opinion of a native gentleman," would suggest that this British official sees little use in distinguishing between Hindus and Muslims. Given his nearly two decades as an Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer, Plowden's agreement with the unnamed interlocutor can be expected to have been based on his own considerable experience in north India. Yet, as the architect of the first successful all-India census, Plowden positioned religion as one of the two central categories of statistical differentiation. In doing so, the officer kept to a tradition dating from at least 1800 in which British surveys repeatedly reasserted the centrality of religion among Indians using one of the most influential of disciplines: statistics.

Of the modes of comparison identified by Jonathan Z. Smith, the statistical ranks among the most authoritative because of its particular consonance with scientistic ideals. This becomes especially apparent through a close examination of Mughal, Marwari and British approaches—an examination necessitated, too, by the question about the uniqueness of British enumerative techniques. The resulting investigation will help demonstrate a central argument of this chapter and, indeed, of this book: perhaps the most profound change British rule helped foster in South Asia stemmed not just from their incessant focus on Hindus and Muslims, but on the *qualities* of the categories in various forms of representation. The historical game-changer was not that Britons viewed Hinduism and

Islam as mutually antagonistic communities but—less obviously and more perniciously—as mutually exclusive categories of social belonging that bifurcated nearly every societal and cultural dimension of India.

The census in Bihar demonstrated how classifications of convenience for government officials transformed into contested identities for the Indian public as the census went from an enumerative exercise of the British government to an authoritative representation of the social body and a vital tool of indigenous interests. All of this pivoted on the fact that statistical comparison in British India relied upon a purportedly scientific classificatory system dissimilar to Indic antecedents yet similar to that of medieval Europe: focused on mutually exclusive, essence-defined, religious categories.

Both the divergence of British systems from indigenous ones and their epistemic impact become apparent in a systematic comparison of specific examples of pre-British and British enumerations of Indians. Therefore, the chapter first examines Mughal, Marwari, and early British texts regarding the Marwar state to demonstrate some of the general qualities that distinguished British enumerations—particularly the censuses—from those that immediately preceded them. Then, it will demonstrate how the ascendant taxonomic ideals of natural science informed the coalescing British system of demographic classification. And third, the chapter will trace the history of the census in Bihar* with particular attention to how the census contributed to a confluence of disciplines that, in turn, reinforced and authorized the results of the census.

The developments since the census of 1871–1872 demonstrate the slow evolution of this epistemic regime that promoted the interrelation of a variety of intellectual disciplines such as demographics, linguistics, ethnology, and archaeology. These new disciplines of knowledge—accredited through the scientific method and legitimized through their recognition by already acknowledged disciplines—offered their own narratives of universal humanity in which Indian categories were given a comparative place using evolutionary development. Together, they formed what I call, rephrasing a term from C. A. Bayly,[2] a matrix of information. The power of statistics both to undergird this matrix and to justify the mutually exclusive categories that typified it, as well as to illustrate simultaneously the dynamics of scientism, requires a more involved investigation than that found in the topics of our other chapters.

## MUGHAL, MARWARI, AND BRITISH ENUMERATIONS

In the academic debates about the influence of British rule both in altering the epistemic landscape and in shaping the social tensions evident in contemporary South Asia, the

* Given the unavailability of archival materials depicting events on a village level, this chapter's focus will need to broaden from Chainpur to the district and province levels. The government does not seem to have preserved the enumerator slips that would have allowed a frame of reference centered primarily on the village.

impact of the census has provided an important side theater of disagreement. The most prominent articulations of the perspective minimalizing the divergence of the British census from Indian precedents—essays by Norbert Peabody and Sumit Guha—provide what most scholars from the opposite camp do not: detailed analysis of pre-British enumerations. Peabody and Guha go a long way to demonstrating that the census in British India did not differ greatly from enumeration[†] efforts by Mughals, Marwaris, and other pre-British states insofar as they demonstrate the use of religious- and caste-group identities. Thus, Peabody and Guha argue, British efforts at counting the Indian population can hardly be accused of fomenting the communal and caste violence too often evident in the last century.

That Mughals, Marwaris, and others used caste and religious categories in some of their efforts at enumeration is beyond doubt. However, neither Peabody nor Guha properly appreciate the *differing quality* of those sets of categories and the *divergent contexts* of these particular knowledge projects. In brief, states that immediately predated the British ascent occasionally referred to religious and caste groups in their social accounting efforts, but Britons imagined that every individual Indian *essentially* associated with a religious classification such as "Hindu" and "Muslim," and that these two identities in particular represented mutually exclusive categories that at times violently omitted others due to their essentially contradictory qualities. Meanwhile, as Bayly has explained, pre-British states tended toward plural information orders that overlapped one another. Their methods of data collection relied on interpersonal relations that narrowly communicated data from those on the ground to specific state officials. In contrast, the British sought to contrive a singular information order with multiple facets, each expected to reinforce one another's conclusions within a context of top-down standardization. Hence, their information order tended to be impersonal with conclusions broadly communicated, promising the ideal of a panoptic vision to both the state *and* the public. The confidence in quantification, the interconnections to various disciplines, and the promise of a totalizing vision of society all represented the hallmarks of the scientistic vision of science.

The difference between British and some previous Indian population enumerations is aptly demonstrated in an essay by Peabody that compares the seventeenth-century *Marvar ra Parganam ri Vigat* (*An Account of the Districts of Marwar*) with a nineteenth-century British survey of the same district. In his account, home minister Munhata Nainsi completed a large survey of the Rajasthani kingdom of Marwar between 1658 and 1664. Peabody's work attempts to weigh in on the debate regarding the significance of caste identity in pre-British South Asia, aptly demonstrating an interest in caste in Marwari enumerations, and in Abul Fazl Allami's *Ain-i Akbari*, which Peabody speculates was influential in Nainsi's work a century later. However, defying his own conclusions, Peabody's example unwittingly shows the pre-British absence of two distinctive qualities

[†] Technically, an enumeration is any sort of counting while a census counts individuals.

of the British classification model: the centrality of religion as an organizing category in a system supposedly universal in its ability to account for everyone.

Peabody demonstrates the similarities between Nainsi's seventeenth-century survey and one completed by British agent Alexander Boileau, reflecting the continuities that often carried from pre-British to British enumerations. Both compiled their data as servants of a government interested in land revenue and social governance. Boileau, in his survey of Rajasthani kingdoms in 1835, paralleled Nainsi's practice of distinguishing according to caste the households he counted. However, the divergence between the two surveys is reflective both of the variance in enumerative procedures and in the changing standards of British classification practices. The differences are threefold, as Peabody explains. First, Nainsi did not standardize his lists. That is, the manner and order in which the survey lists castes and sub-castes varied from locality to locality, whereas Boileau used a single organizational system to present his data. Second, the earlier work did not provide nor allow, in part because of this lack of standardization, regional aggregation of its numbers. Thus, local results seldom were placed into larger comparative contexts, whereas Boileau's numbers were aggregated from the local to the regional level. Third, and perhaps more strikingly, Nainsi and Boileau organized the caste names on their lists using entirely different systems. Nainsi categorized the households of a village by caste and grouped these two larger categories of "purifying castes" (*pavan jati*) and non-purifying castes. In some instances, he also grouped sub-castes among castes, and groups among occupations. In contrast, Boileau's survey lists *all* castes for *all* towns, ignores any hierarchies that rank caste, and, instead, categorizes them as either Hindu or Muslim—a differentiation almost entirely absent from Nainsi's lists.[3]

The *Ain-i Akbari* provides yet another demonstration of how pre-British enumerations differed from ones commissioned by the British government in India. This work by administrator Abul Fazl Allami, completed in about 1590, offered a wide-ranging overview of Akbar's rule, extending from the imperial household to the cosmological speculations of the emperor's subjects. Primarily concerned with annual land revenue collections from each *sarkar* (district) of the twelve *subah*s or provinces that composed Akbar's realm, Abul Fazl never attempted to offer an accounting for all of the empire's subjects. In many examples (though not in the case of Marwar), a list of kinship groups—*jati*s and *baradari*s—was appended after an accounting of the cavalry and infantry proffered by each, apparently denoting the region's militarily dominant groups. The text inventoried exogamous kinship groups together for some *sarkar*s without regard to Hindu or Muslim label, so that Jat, Rajput, or Ahir might be listed alongside Afghan, Saiyid, or Kiyam-khani. Although elsewhere the *Ain-i Akbari* differentiated between Hindu and Musalman, in these listings the kinship group, not its religious association, mattered most. Significantly, Abul Fazl, like Nainsi, made no effort at greater aggregation or classification of these groups. Meanwhile, as Guha describes, a Mughal enumeration of Jodhpur city (c. 1670) created a list of castes and occupations, again without specific regard to religion. It counted

two thousand houses of bankers and traders of varying communities, fifteen hundred of Brahmans, five hundred of Pancholis, and nine thousand others belonging to other various castes. These numbers served taxation interests since different communities negotiated different taxation levels. During emperor Aurangzeb's short-lived imposition of the *jizya*, or poll tax, on non-Muslims his court made use of this enumeration but otherwise there was no connection to religious identity. Nor was there evidence of an attempt to count every individual nor aggregate these numbers with those of other regions. Moreover, the fact that the category "various castes" (*punjat*) had twice as many members as all the other categories combined evidenced a disinterest in identifying and counting all discrete caste categories.[4]

In contrast with the classification schemes used by Abul Fazl, the Mughals in Jodhpur, and Nainsi, Boileau's categorical effort demonstrates five scientistic presumptions about statistics that differentiated British enumerations from earlier Indian ones.

1. Every individual Indian can be counted.
2. Every individual Indian can be classified according to religion. This is made possible by the universal quality that all Indians are essentially religious.
3. Classification by religion assumes that each religious group represents a mutually exclusive category. Hence, no individual can belong to more than one group.
4. Quantified data can be aggregated to allow variable levels of focus, from village to global views.
5. Statistical information can complement other forms of knowledge and ideally can allow a cross-referenced, multidisciplinary view of society. This requires standardized forms of measurement and methods of research.

Although British census efforts may have never fully realized all of these ideals at once, their influence created significant divergences from the models existing in states preceding theirs. The technological ability to mass-produce these statistics, their public distribution by the state, and an increasingly caste- and religion-based national politics all compounded the long-term effects of these qualities in British enumerations. Whereas neither Abul Fazl nor Nainsi concerned himself with producing entirely compatible classification systems for all the people found in the different places he surveyed, Boileau and later British enumerators did.

As we noted in regard to mapping, the work of Abul Fazl and Nainsi was not deficient because their systems varied from what became standard enumerative practice for the British Indian government. As far as we can tell, the five scientistic assumptions inherent in Boileau's enumeration were not critical components in the enumerative knowledge projects to which Nainsi and Abul Fazl contributed; it did not promote their goals. Neither author served a state that assumed it could (or sought to be able to) classify *all and every one* of its subjects, let alone all of humanity. In contrast, the British system facilitated the aggregation of figures into increasingly abstract, nested levels such as province

and empire, always with an ideal of universal comparison. Despite some exceptions, Britons persistently sought to categorize all the people of India according to their presumably most significant characteristic—religion—and then subdivide this according to the subcategories peculiar to each religious community (e.g., caste for Hindus, Sunni and Shia for Muslims). In other words, this system inscribed, or reinscribed more deeply and broadly, communal boundaries and social rankings supposedly derived from indigenous communities. And it purportedly did so based on scientific research and reasoning.

Although some contemporary commentators might have considered these discontinuities between pre-British and British enumerations as the laudatory outcome of a more scientifically informed episteme displacing less statistically sophisticated, more religiously inflected ones, historical comparison challenges such easy conclusions. Recall that four elements characterized the Christian classification model of medieval Europe: successive dichotomous divisions, categories based on a particular essence found in specific individuals, hierarchy according to a providential teleology, and mutually exclusive categories. Part of the distinctiveness of Linnaeus's taxonomical system derived from dropping the first and third qualities. Yet, British classifications of Indians often reintroduced a teleological conceptualization and organization of categories. For instance, as the author of Bengal's first census report (1872) reflected on the difficulty in defining who was a proper Hindu, he noted "It was only the other day that we were reminded by high authority that Hindus are only heathen, little differing from the aboriginal tribes who worship stocks and stones. What then is the test of faith which is to distinguish the real Hindu from the semi-Hinduised aboriginal?"[5] Similar sentiments expressed by other Britons suggest that their classification efforts—infused by residual Christocentrism and historical evolutionism—appropriated a teleology that would have startled Linnaeus or, for the matter, Darwin. Any surprise about these survivals of the medieval episteme only testify to our own expectations regarding the discontinuity of modern science from Europe's Catholic-dominated past, a supposition of "scientific revolution" that is itself embedded in a teleological narrative of progress. Hence, even as we question to what degree British statistical efforts—and other knowledge projects—succeeded in achieving the secular ideal many attributed to them, we recognize that the occasional reliance on teleological organization represents yet another difference between British and pre-British classifications and evidence of Christian influence on the science.[‡]

The transition from the British Indian government's use of these earlier classification schemes to those deployed later was not abrupt. In part this demonstrates the initial

‡ While Jonathan Z. Smith recognizes the parallels between Christian, Linnaean, and Western religious studies taxonomies, he does not detail the background that makes them historically contiguous. See Smith 1982, 3–6.

influence of indigenous enumerators in fashioning British counts. In part this shows the role—however declining—of earlier information systems and their products. So, for instance, the *Ain-i Akbari* initially attracted British attention. James Rennell, first surveyor general of Fort William (Calcutta), drew heavily on the work he considered "the highest authority" for his effort to map India.[6] Later Britons, more confident in their own statistical systems, would celebrate it more as an "historical curiosity."[7] More consistent was the British fixation on both religion and caste, which led their demographic projects from the start to emphasize a severely bounded society, whose religious and caste borders purportedly promoted only prejudice and intolerance, not the mutual regard required in British conceptions of a modern nation.[8]

## EARLY ENUMERATIONS IN BRITISH INDIA

Assuming the "fact" that Indians distinguished themselves accordingly, servants of the British Indian government understood religion and caste as essential qualities for defining Indianness. Conforming to the modern demands of Western scientific taxonomy, many officials sought to discern the boundaries of religion and caste as they sought to count the populations for whom they were responsible. The enumerations they completed—culminating in the all-India Census of India—reflected the changing classificatory norms in the crystallizing natural sciences.

### *A tale of two city enumerations*

Although the earliest British enumerations of Indians in Chainpur's region unsurprisingly showed the most continuity with indigenous enumerations, they nevertheless demonstrated distinctive differences, particularly in regard to religion. The differences between two British initiated and Indian enabled enumerations of Benares reflect the coalescing methods that would culminate in the discipline of statistics later in the century.

In 1800 or 1801, Resident of Benares Deane ordered Zulfiakar Ali, the *kotwal* (police chief), to collect the following information on the city: number of houses, classification of houses by stories with an estimation of the number of inhabitants, catalogue of trades, and numbers of criminals. Deane's *munshi*, Sital Singh, drew up the resulting account. Like the enumerations of Nainsi and Jodhpur described earlier, Zulfiakar Ali's effort focuses primarily on counting houses. On the few occasions when Ali counts individuals, he does so only in round numbers.[9]

The salient categories listed in Zulfiakar Ali's account are occupation, caste, and religion. The longest section classifies homes by the occupation of their inhabitants. A brief excerpt demonstrates that the listings were not altogether systematic.

| | |
|---|---|
| Masons, stone-cutters, carpenters, and porters, both Hindoos and Mussulmauns, | 2,153 |
| Bearers, Hindoos only, | 406 |
| Barbers, Hindoos and Mussulmauns, | 385 |
| Washermen, | 518 |
| Timbrel players, sweepers of worship, washers of dead bodies, Mahomedans, | 70 |
| Minstrels, prostitutes, mountebanks, and dancing-women, | 280 |
| Hindoo students, and faquirs both Hindoos and Mussulmauns, who live in alms-houses, | 250 |

As the examples illustrate, some lines attach a religious identity to the occupation, while others do not. For some listings, Ali uses caste names to offer more specificity, such as "Dealers in grain, Hindoos, chiefly Rajepoots" and "Armed peons, Rajepoots, Birjbausse, and Mahomedans." While the association of caste to occupation demonstrates a similarity with earlier surveys in India, the effort to distinguish most occupations according to religion represents a critical departure. Prescient of future enumeration efforts, this list makes religion a classificatory scheme by which the data of apparent concern—occupation—is qualified. However, the list does not directly tabulate the number of Muslims and Hindus,[10] as most later enumerations would.

Over the next thirty years, various East India Company officials—sometimes under orders, sometimes of their own volition—would organize urban enumeration efforts, and all would place a premium on religious classification. This was so for various cities in the Bengal Presidency, including Bardwan (1813–1814),[11] Allahabad (1824 and 1834), Murshidabad (1829),[12] Dacca (1830),[13] and Benares again (c. 1831–1832).[14] Most of the enumerations counted houses, a majority listed occupations and/or castes, many counted individuals, and some gave ratios on sex. But all relied upon religion as a primary category of enumeration and analysis.

As taxonomy and statistics branched from other forms of knowledge and coalesced as their own disciplines, they had discernable effects in British India. Unsatisfied with the method and results of the previous count ordered by Deane and executed by Ali, administrator James Prinsep (d. 1840) embarked on his own "statistical enquiry" in the 1820s. After describing each neighborhood according both to the number and height of houses and to the population according to sex and age, Prinsep attempts to list the principal castes and trades of the city. In contrast with Ali and Deane's list, he carefully establishes a detailed, multilayered categorization. He first divides Hindus from Muslims. Hindus he classifies according to the *varna* system—Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras—a social taxonomy based on certain Sanskrit texts and promoted

by orientalists.[§] Prinsep then subclassifies these four into subgroups and, occasionally, sub-subgroups, each labeled as a "profession or occupation." Prinsep emphasizes that most of his information comes from two years of conversations among *caudhri*s or leaders of the communities and, unusual among his peers, he lists the name of each. Perhaps informed by these sources, he does not appear smitten by the easy associations of occupations with *varna* that interpretations of the texts led some orientalists to embrace, such as Kshatriyas as warriors and Brahmans as pandits and sacrifiers. Instead, Prinsep indicates that one *gotra* (exogamous caste sub-division) of Brahmans might be sacrifiers, another moneylenders, and yet another servants. Finally, Prinsep complements the four *varna* categories with one labeled "Hindu fakirs," reflecting how certain sannyasis (ascetics), among others, departed the caste system.[15]

Muslims posed the same difficulty to Prinsep that would bedevil British censuses for the next century: while many Muslims appeared to divide into caste-like groups associated with specific occupations, a separate collection of groups of higher social status escaped occupational generalization. Hence, he cumulatively describes these groups as "professions," and labels Julahas as weavers, Darzis as tailors, and Malis as gardeners, while he lists Shaikhs, Saiyids, Mughals, and Pathans as "Persons of independent fortune." Later observers would describe the latter groups as *baradari*s, favoring a term for high status groups whose members intermarried among themselves but not among the lower status Muslims associated with specific occupations. Although the latter appeared similar to castes, they—like the *baradari*s—intermarried among one another far more commonly than did contemporary Hindu castes.[16]

While Prinsep sharply challenges the accuracy of the earlier enumeration (for which he pointedly blames Ali and Singh, not Deane), his critique of its classifications demonstrates two important changes in British demographics. While he concedes that Ali and Singh's inflation of the city population figures may have demonstrated devotion to their employer, Deane, he mocks "their zeal and diligence in the classification of '*suspected persons*'" in the town, which included such "curious items" as *badmash* or "Persons who have a pugnacious disposition." These categories, like the uneven list of occupations that they follow, recall the idiosyncrasies of Borges's "Chinese encyclopedia" mentioned in the third interlude. Prinsep's persnicketiness demonstrates the increasingly strict standards for enumeration classification, to which he would likely have been sensitive given his scientific affectations (he had edited *Gleamings of Science*, a publication that evolved into *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*). Despite these differences, the two enumerations share a focus on caste and occupation that inherently involves religious identity.

While Prinsep declares his interest in "caste and profession," he—like Ali and Deane—primarily qualify all or most of the categories according to religion. Considering that reli-

[§] Eager to make sense of the complex social order surrounding them, European scholars seized upon the "Hindu sacred texts" that certain Brahmans—the presumed religious authorities—indicated to be the basis of their society.

gion offers no greater insight into the matters of population and economics that clearly motivated these social accounting efforts, it can only follow that these authors viewed religious identity as a fundamental quality of both caste and occupation. Critically significant for British statistical projects is the fact that Prinsep's classificatory policing forced all occupation groups under the heading of either "Hindu" or "Muslim," while Ali and Deane's did not. This, combined with the conceit that enumerations could count every individual, not just houses, signaled a crucial change from pre-British enumerations. Such categorization of statistical returns—standardized in subsequent censuses and used to classify every individual in the population in enumerations of issues as diverse as sex, marriage, and literacy—repeatedly reinscribed in the minds of a public (which had growing access to and interest in statistical data) that religion represented the fundamental quality of every Indian.

### *"Statistical" surveys and the refining of a defining term*

As the East India Company (EIC) became increasingly established in north India, it inaugurated new projects in search of more expansive demographic knowledge than what the urban surveys allowed. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Company inaugurated walking surveys such as those undertaken by Mackenzie in the south and Buchanan in Bengal and Bihar. By the time the central government held the first all-India census in 1871–1872, every province but Bengal had taken a shot at a province-wide enumeration. Soon thereafter, ICS officer W. W. Hunter completed his *Statistical Survey of Bengal*. These preliminary efforts preceding the all-India censuses demonstrate some of the assumptions in statistics and presage the difficulties in classification encountered during large-scale enumerations.

The use and meaning of the term *statistics* itself reflected some of the important changes at this time. Summing up its laundry-list set of topics to investigate, the Court of Directors' 1807 order directed Buchanan to execute a "statistical survey" of Bengal and Bihar,[17] a phrase that carried an expectation for numerical data, great precision, and/or scientific rigor.[18] The word "statistical" originated in sixteenth-century Italy from the term *stato* (state) and referred to information of use for state affairs, including—but not limited to—systematically collected, numerical information.[19] John Sinclair, borrowing the term from German, introduced it into English through his *Statistical Account of Scotland* (1791–1799), a massive project undertaken by a network of Presbyterian ministers. By the 1830s, as scientistic faith in quantification gained gradual acceptance among Britons, they increasingly equated the word with a science of numbers.[20]

Michel Foucault has explained this increasing emphasis on the numerical by demonstrating the important connection between quantification and classification in modern European thinking. Elaborating on Linnaeus's proposal for a standardized description, Foucault explains that counting the features of a specimen (e.g., number of fins) and quantifying their size relative to one another (e.g., height of the dorsal fin relative to the height of the tail fin) provides a numerical description supposedly understandable to everyone.[21]

Hence, as he does for each species in *Fishes*, the surveyor Francis Buchanan offers descriptions of *Cyprinus rerio* in two universal languages of learning as he complements his Latin description with a numerical one: B 3, D 8, P 9? V 7, A 16, C–?[22] In so doing, Buchanan follows the same enumerative impulse that motivated Britons to impose the graticule on India in their effort to geometrically define the subcontinent and position it relative to the rest of the globe. Both cartographic and zoological quantifications promised to offer objective knowledge accessible to all readers[**] on objects that, through their quantification, could be related to one another. The renowned mathematician and physicist William Thomson, Baron Kelvin (d. 1907) unambiguously proclaimed this faith in quantification: "When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers, you know something about it, but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind."[23]

Chapter 4 focused in part on the ethnographic descriptions of both Buchanan's journal in and account of Shahabad district, so here we will focus mostly on his quantifications. These reflect similar concerns—employment, poverty, and population fluctuations—as those motivating Englishmen to count their own country's population in the century following their first census (1801)[24]: a century dominated by early demographer Thomas Robert Malthus's foreboding predictions of population growth outpacing resources. Like his counterparts in England, Buchanan provides broad numerical information on India's geography, occupations, population, education, and commerce. Given the EIC's urge to profitability, the concern with work and trade is predictable. Hence, Buchanan details how Chainpur enjoyed two occasional markets a week as well as the largest permanent marketplace in the district, after Bhabua. Its shops included,

| | |
|---|---|
| 6 money changers | 4 money lenders |
| 15 retailers of provisions | 5 retailers of sweetmeats |
| 6 retailers of betle leaf | 6 oilmen |
| 4 potters | 2 dyers |
| 3 blacksmiths | 5 goldsmiths |
| 1 coppersmith | 4 makers of glass ornaments |
| 1 maker of fireworks | 1 cutler |
| 5 stone cutters | 2 butchers |
| 2 bakers & cooks | 2 knitters of strings |
| 2 retailers of essences | 4 retailers of manihari[††] goods |
| 2 makers of earrings | 1 shop for retailing palm wine |
| 1 house of bad fame | |

** Perhaps the most extreme manifestation of faith in the universality of numbers can be found aboard the American space probe Galileo 10, the first human-made object expected to leave the solar system. Judging mathematics to be a universal language, its designers included an inscribed plate that uses numbers to help an extraterrestrial audience locate Earth and take the physical measure of its human inhabitants.

†† Beads and bracelets.

Perhaps for business reasons and/or out of concern for law and order, Buchanan dedicates another table to the number of people in both the district and in each *thana* (police division) who indulge in intoxicants, including liquor, palm wine, tobacco, opium,[‡‡] ganja, bhang, and betel.[25] Other tables seek to categorize the districts' inhabitants.

Despite their emphasis on economic behavior, the statistical tables and the *Account*'s narrative reaffirm the significance of religion to Buchanan's understanding, as shown in chapter 4. While most tables enumerate those identified with specific activities or circumstances, only two purport to account for all (male) residents: one that delineates their employment and the other their religion. Religiously, Buchanan classifies the district's population as either Hindu or Muslim, seriously underestimating the ratio of Muslims to Hindus[§§] as fifteen to one.[27] While statistics on employment clearly address Company concerns for its financial success, we can only conclude that Buchanan's religion bookkeeping represents his sense that this social dimension deeply and pervasively defines Indians. If any Briton later questioned the preeminence of religion in India, Buchanan's widely acknowledged (if not easily available), authoritative accounts of Shahabad and more than a half dozen other districts likely assuaged their doubts.

> 1813: Chainpur, not less than 1000 houses[26]

Buchanan's influence had not waned when the Government of India appointed W. W. Hunter (d. 1900) director general of statistics and, in 1869, ordered him to establish a methodical and uniform plan for collecting and publishing materials for a gazetteer of India. Indeed, as already mentioned, the government dispatched Buchanan's district accounts from London for Hunter's use. At the same time, Hunter supervised and edited the twenty-volume *Statistical Account of Bengal* (1875–1877), with a volume dedicated to each district, including Shahabad. A brief consideration of the differences between Buchanan and Hunter's work provides insight into the statistical turn made in the nineteenth century.

Preeminent among Hunter's goals was the establishment of comparative statistics for India.[28] Various public organizations had pressed the government on this prospect, including the Council of the Asiatic Society, since the previous revenue surveys conducted in various districts proved too demographically unsystematic to suffice. In giving Hunter his charge, the state clearly imagined a singular India, whose population

‡‡ The concern is somewhat ironic given that, in the previous year, Shahabad district contributed Rs. 83,973 worth of opium to the Company's factory in Patna. Buchanan 1986b (1934), 426.

§§ Britons repeatedly made this miscalculation not only in Bihar but India in general, until the first comprehensive census changed their views.

could be statistically embraced at one glance, or disaggregated with increasingly complex categorical systems. So, while Hunter cautions his audience that the populations of just the provinces of Bengal and Assam are more varied than those of half a dozen European countries,[29] his statistical endeavor nevertheless helps promote a notion of Indian consistency and European difference. The ability to consecutively aggregate very specific village numbers into district sums into provincial figures into all-Indian statistics implicitly promotes the category "Indian," even as these qualities signaled the scientistically valorized qualities of exactness and aggregation missing from Buchanan's accounting. All the while, like Buchanan, Hunter places priority on religion as an identifier among Indians. Consistent with the 1871–1872 census—and all to come—Hunter's initial disaggregation of the overall population figures for Shahabad district is according to age (below and above twelve years of age), sex (male and female), and religion (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and "other denominations"). His confident application of religion as a metacategory contrasts with the awkwardness inherent in the other metacategories he employs. For instance, Hunter bases his "ethnical division of the people" on "race or caste": two not-altogether-commensurate categories.[30] Meanwhile, that "non-Asiatics" (English, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, German, and "unspecified") was among the few categories not religiously subdivided repeats the common Western view that Europeans are not defined by their religion(s) in the manner Indians are.

Impelled by the scientistic expectation that enumerations should be totalizing, aggregative, and precise, Hunter's *Statistical Account of Bengal*—which prefigures his Indian gazetteer project—sought to out-Buchanan Buchanan by accounting for all significant facets of society through more precisely detailed and more rigorously classified numerical and textual descriptions than the Scottish surveyor managed. Inevitably, however, Hunter's intention collided with the challenges of reducing all Indians to quantities distributed among comparable categories. In this, as in other ways, Hunter reflects the struggles of the Government of India to enumerate and classify all Indians according to the science of numbers that statistics was becoming, while maintaining attention to the essential Indian qualification of religion. This struggle would be taken up in each of the eight subsequent all-India censuses.

## THE ALL-INDIA CENSUS

Although an effort to make a complete count of every Indian did not take place until more than a century after their initial conquests, the British ultimately established the all-India census as the central component of their Indian state's epistemic order. From its initiation in 1871–1872 to its conclusion (under foreign rule) in 1941, Britons viewed the census as providing essential information about South Asia, as demonstrating the

scientific basis of their policies, and as objectively confirming the categorical assumptions of their epistemic order. In the prelude to planning the first universal census, the Government of Bengal—of all provincial governments, the least favorable toward such an operation—argued, "The want of anything like even an approximate knowledge of the population is much felt in every Department of the Administration."[31] One member of the Government of India expressed his confidence in the census to address multiple concerns when he declared that complete statistics were necessary from "an administrative, political, as well as scientific point of view."[32] The successful conclusion of the first all-India census vindicated both the expectations and the expense. In its administrative report for that year, the Government of Bengal declared that "the result has been almost, it may be said, to revolutionize our ideas both in regard to the amount of the population of these provinces, and relatively in regard to its distribution in different districts, races, and religions; while by showing that the numbers vastly exceeded any former computation, it has wholly altered our calculations with respect to the incidence of taxation, the consumption of salt, and many other matters."[33]

Seventy years later, the government continued to value the census, even if it could no longer afford not just the extravagant, associated surveys that the census had spawned, but even many elements previously considered standard. In 1941, the Bureau of Information declared

> that the Census Report is perhaps the most important report fron [*sic*] the point of view of Government publicity. One of the problems confronting the Bureau is to provide visiting foreign correspondents with material on social, economic and religious conditions in India. Any material written up expressly for this purpose is regarded with suspicion as these correspondents feel that the Bureau is interested in presenting a picture of disunity in India in order to put the Congress and the Muslim League in the wrong on the constitutional issue. A Census Report is, however, above suspicion. It is a factual record of population strength and endeavours to give a picture of social, religious, economic and educational conditions in the country.[34]

The supposed factuality and authority of the census impressed not only foreign reporters, but many Indians too. Far from being seen as a banal bureaucratic operation, the census became a key player and a contested field for the national politics of the 1930s and 1940s. Whereas Mohandas Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign sought to obstruct enumeration operations in 1921 and 1931, the players of communal politics aimed to co-opt the census by 1941. In other words, whereas nationalist movements once threatened the census through their strident opposition, a decade later they threatened the census with excessive enthusiasm.[35] In an even more extreme reversal, by the final British Indian census some government officials argued that census operations directly aggravated communalism,[36] so that the tool once calibrated by Britons to measure Hindu and Muslim differences now served South Asians interested in exacerbating them.

### *Totalizing and exclusive taxa*

The scholarship of Bernard Cohn (1996) and Arjun Appadurai (1994) has outlined the history and dynamics of census classification, objectification, and enumeration. But neither of these anthropologists, nor many of the others who have written on the census (see Barrier 1981), seem to consider the ramifications of the census administration's decision to prioritize religion categories and to use Christian-informed, scientistic classification. The ideals of "science" and its associated classificatory protocols simultaneously shaped the execution and productions of the census even as it legitimized and authorized its conclusions.

Of all of scientism's components, the history of the census demonstrates none so strongly as its totalizing vision. Quite different from ethnographic comparison with its accidental nature, statistical comparison offers to some the prospect of a complete comparison of all possible individuals. However, this was possible only once sufficient categories have been established that could encompass each and every individual. Not only did government officials ultimately endeavor to count every individual, but they continually sought to do so simultaneously. Early enumerations in British India—any one of which might take years to accomplish—focused on city populations and Europeans residing in the presidencies.[37] In the middle third of the nineteenth century, population counts were sought for larger territories such as presidencies, provinces, and states. By mid-century, the Court of Directors made their first effort to estimate the total number of households throughout their territories, instructing revenue surveyors in 1847 to carefully differentiate between Hindu and Muslim homes.[38] This project's unsatisfactory results led the central government to first contemplate a simultaneous census of all British India.

British promoters of a census—an expensive, time-consuming endeavor anywhere—legitimated their arguments through scientistic ideals. Because a census seeks to count every individual, it diverged from previous efforts to enumerate houses and estimate occupants and, hence, appealed to those predisposed to empirical studies and their promise of universal classification and a totalistic vision. For many, a properly "scientific" count had to occur simultaneously across the entire target population. But in the shadow of the postponed effort to achieve an all-India census in 1861 (impossible given that as late as 1859 some areas remained unsettled following the previous years' rebellion),[39] a number of provinces tried their hand at more limited censuses. Despite favorable results from these attempts, the Government of Bengal remained opposed to the prospect, demonstrating that the lure of scientism did not always outweigh practical and financial matters. As late as 1870, the Bengal government, responsible for a larger area and population than any other census region, communicated to the Government of India that its lieutenant governor "is of opinion that a scientific and simultaneous census is neither indispensable nor expedient." He preferred "a rougher method" that, although less accurate, would be practical enough.[40] Nevertheless, the siren call of scientism's totalistic vision

would not be denied, and as the central government brushed aside such hesitations and prepared for an all-India census, it sought maximum coverage, extending even beyond the borders of India.

The perception that native states could not properly conduct a census only reaffirmed British reliance on scientistic paradigms to qualify enumerations and instantiate a standardized norm. For instance, in 1859 the European resident of Baroda forwarded numbers from "an alleged census" undertaken by the government there, but confided that he held no faith in statistics compiled outside British administration.[41] A few years later, the resident of Hyderabad informed the Government of India that he could not comment on the population of the princely state because the nizams did not make customary censuses.[42] These conditions impelled many Britons to promote an ideal census that could most satisfy demands for aggregated, totalizing knowledge based on methodically and systematically collected data. This fit what historian David Ludden describes as "the routinization of colonial administration," in which "individual explorations gave way to routine reports, native informants became employees and subjects of the Raj, and journey literature gave way to official correspondence."[43]

The various local governments sought synchronization to ensure as totalistic a statistical picture as possible. In earlier deliberations, the government had chosen 1861 as the census's projected date in part to coincide with the next United Kingdom census.[44] Later, England's registrar general promoted the idea that censuses of England, its colonies, and the Indian empire should all occur within the same year.[45] Yet, perhaps the grandest proposal for a truly totalistic view occurred when the British government considered a report by the Royal Statistical Society deliberating the feasibility of a "universal synchronous census" of all "civilized" societies for 1900.[46] Needless to say, governments persistently had to weigh scientistic ideals against practical limitations.

Less publicly commented upon than these scientistic qualities, but much more consequential, was the use of taxonomies. Appadurai has argued that statistical enumerations create "homogenous bodies (within categories) because number, by its nature, flattens idiosyncrasies and creates boundaries around these homogenous bodies."[47] The significance of this fact cannot be underestimated, but it was true in British India only because of the endemic scientistic perspective, which presumed mutually exclusive categories that apply universally. As Borges's fictional taxonomy has demonstrated, such categories need not be the rule. British officials involved in the data collection understood this too, given the category-defying responses they often encountered. For instance, the report on the 1869 census of Oudh lamented that the enumeration offered no trace of Native Christians, while responses such as "Thomas Roberts, *alias* Muhammad Bukhsh, European" appeared that challenged classification expectations.[48] Similar frustrations continued to haunt the government even at the terminus on British rule, when the superintendent of the all-India census equivocated, "The frontier between a tribal religion and Islam or Christianity is sharp and definite; the tribesman has either crossed it or not, broadly speaking. With Hinduism on the other hand there is no sharp frontier." Such circumstances produced

quandaries only when census officials expected individuals to belong to one category alone. Hence, a European cannot have a Muslim name and a tribal defied easy classification as a Hindu or animist, although "broadly speaking" their identity as a Muslim or Christian supposedly was more obvious.[49]

These difficulties with categories persisted throughout the four stages of census work. First, local enumerators would number every house and then query the head of the household on each question on their questionnaire, such as "What is your religion?" Enumerators' instructions commonly urged them to record whatever they were told because some enumerators took it upon themselves to record what they considered a more accurate answer according to the categories that made sense to them. Second, census officials determined which identities they would privilege as usable categories, allotting one to each of the limited number of pigeonholes into which any one enumeration slip might be placed. Third, the sub-divisional offices would tabulate the recorded results for later transmittal to the provincial government[50] before, fourth, an interpretative narrative offered an explanation regarding the significance of certain numbers. Was a Jain a Buddhist? A Hindu? Or should an additional category be provided for Jains alone? Under no circumstance could any one identity either fit under two categories or be left unaccounted for. We might entitle this "the platypus syndrome" after the categorically wily Australian animal that defied early European visitors to Australia. Sporting a duck's bill, a mammal's body, and a beaver's tail (while laying eggs to boot), the platypus appeared to belong to several taxa and, because of this, to none. Taxonomists argued for a century where to place it. Finally, they concocted an entirely new order—the monotreme—to accommodate it and its one cousin, the echidna.

However, census officials did not have a century to wrestle with "aberrant" identities, but only a few short weeks as they compiled the literally millions of census slips from each of their provinces. An identity that did not fit obviously existing categories had to be either reconciled with a preexisting category, sloughed off into the "other" category, or accorded its own. The mechanism of the census demanded specificity and unambiguity. Tabulation relied upon a slip of information for each individual that workers placed into slots:[51] one per category. Census officials truly pigeonholed individuals, even those who had not pigeonholed themselves.

As already noted, scientistic taxonomies make sense not only through the types of categories they employ but also the arrangement of the categories and the relation of each to others. Like categories, these too might be suggested by informants, but ultimately depended on those who wrote the reports, the final stage of the processing of census data. As Bengal struggled to prepare for the first census, the collector of the Bihar district of Purnea explained the various systems of organization undertaken by his subordinates:

> Mr. Campbell arranged his villages according to the English alphabet. Mr. Hayes adopted an arrangement on apparently no principle at all, but I imagined that he put the villages down as they appeared on the original notes . . . Baboo Okhilnath

> Roy has arranged his villages by circles of supervision. Baboo R.C. Mullick has not arranged his villages by circles, but has shewn in the remark column to what circle the villages belong. Mr. Cockburn has not attempted to group his villages, but has merely estimated the number of circles, and the number of supervisors required for reasons stated in a letter of which copy is annexed.[52]

The problem both in Purnea specifically and in British India generally was not a want of organizational method, but making a determination of which particular method to adopt. There was considerably less debate about which classifications would serve as the primary categories of analysis.

Not only did the emphasis on religion in the British Indian census differ from earlier South Asian enumerations, it also differed from censuses elsewhere in the empire. At about the time when India prepared for its first universal census, New Zealand's census of those of European descent showed no attention to religion, except in terms of marriages.[53] The first British census (1801), like the count that Deane and Ali conducted about the same time, focused initially on the enumeration of houses,[54] delineating occupations, and approximating the population. Poverty, population changes, and economic shifts primarily influenced which questions got asked. But Parliament would acquiesce to a question about religion only once in the British census's first two centuries of operation.[55] In that instance, outrage among Nonconformist parliamentary members torpedoed a proposal to enumerate church attendance in England as an unjustifiable intrusion into the liberties of religious conscience. In fact, it was not until 2001 that a census would ask all residents of the United Kingdom about their religious preference. In contrast, religion served as the primary category of difference in British India.

### *The priority of religion among interrelated metacategories*

Religion was not the only concern of British Indian censuses, but it was the most central one. In 1854, while commenting on the recently completed census in the North-West Provinces (N-WP) of the Bengal Presidency, a senior British official remarked that every district showed more males than females among all groups but three. He noted that the situation was more noticeable among Hindus than among Muslims. Considering infanticide as among the various causes at the root of this terrible situation, the officer reported that, "The returns do not distinguish the castes which are known or suspected, to practice female infanticide . . . But it must be left for another census, when the castes and ages of the population shall be recorded, to shew [*sic*] fully the effect of this custom on the number of female children."[56] These comments demonstrate how Britons used censuses to know India's social dynamics, first, by analyzing data through the metacategories of age, sex, and religion, and, then, by filtering these results through the metacategories of caste, sect, nation, and race. As appendix B demonstrates, sex, age, and religion represent the only three questions required of every individual throughout the history of the British Indian census.

Most debates regarding sex had less to do with the metacategory itself or its male/female categories and more to do with the interpretation of the census data.*** While British censuses queried about sex and age to track the overall fertility of the population (addressing both Malthusian apprehensions of overpopulation and military manpower fears regarding underpopulation), in India sex and age questions particularly fed British anxieties about the status of indigenous women. Debate about how to interpret the statistics ensued. We have already seen how the 1854 N-WP census sought statistically supported conclusions about female infanticide. In another instance, the report from the 1869 Oudh census concluded that the lower number of women to men among Hindus relative to Muslims reflected a physiological law already observed in Europe: the older the age of the mother, the higher the proportion of males born to her. Hence, it deduced, the religious difference of Hindu men supposedly marrying earlier and with younger brides explained the difference in populations.[57] However, the Bengal census report for 1872 found the data less conclusive. Noting that males predominated in north Bihar and females in the south, it determined that the situation in southern districts such as Shahabad owed much to the emigration of (male) soldiers and servants. The report concluded that sex ratios among Muslims and Hindus varied too much to discern any physiological law.[58] Despite the divergence in the three reports' deductions, the centrality of religion in analyzing the census data in these cases—even when the conclusions remained elusive—remained salient. While sex and age played a role in British censuses at home, the absence of a question on religion there in contrast with its persistent application in India demonstrates that however important age and sex were to Britons, religion was the category that made for an essential difference between them and Indians.

At times, the census operations themselves offered evidence that undermined presumptions of communal differences in regard to the sexes without leading to changes in those presumptions. This dynamic manifested itself as early as 1856 when the Bengal government first mulled over the idea of participating in an all-India census. One official thought "in the Villages of Behar many of which are occupied by the high spirited and irascible races of Rajpoots and Pathans enquiries regarding the number and sexes of their families unless the object of such enquiries was most carefully and considerably explained, would be offensive and in all probability resisted."[59] Such shared sentiments among these Hindu and Muslim groups did little to negate either the government's ubiquitous bifurcation of data sets on sex into communal categories or its persistent effort to emphasize the communal bifurcation of Chainpur, other villages, and India in general.

*** Eunuchs and hermaphrodites offered the potential for a platypus's challenge to census officials, who were unwilling to ascribe them their own category under "sex" yet did not view them as fitting what were meant to be mutually exclusive categories. Enumerators were given special instruction in 1901 as to how to enter eunuchs (male), as they were again in 1941 (*Census of India, 1901* 1903, 32; Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. OIOC).

Some scholars have asserted the primacy of caste over religion in British epistemic deliberations. For example, Appadurai has claimed caste, not religion, as "*the* central trope" of British taxonomies,[60] while Nicholas Dirks, in his extensive treatment of the subject of imperial-era attitudes toward caste (that extends some of Bernard Cohn's arguments), concludes that both Britons and Indians participated in the construal of caste as the "principal modality of Indian society."[61] Although some South Asians in this period certainly touted the social primacy of caste, such arguments often overlook the categorical supremacy of religion in European eyes. Not uncommonly, when Britons and other Westerners wrote of "Indian society," they meant "Hindu society," omitting Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs who appeared numerically insignificant, Christians who were supposedly delivered from casteism, and Muslims who did not count as properly "Indian" either as a people or as a religion. Examples from all the forms of knowledge considered in this book demonstrates how normatively "Hindu"—and, thus, religious—India was for many Britons (and Indians), and how caste served both as the defining characteristic of Hinduism and as a metonym for "Hindu." Caste was so quintessentially Hindu that caste-like Muslim *ajlaf* groups often prompted comments on the un-Islamic quality of caste, descriptions of Muslims performing other "Hindu" practices, and reflections on the Hindu religious influence on Muslims. Proof of the implicitly religious character imputed to caste was given every time that mention of non-Hindu castes required a comment about Hinduism (usually its contagious or absorptive character) and the religion of the castes involved. Certainly, the role of caste in the British imaginary should not be underestimated, but neither should the often unsaid but understood religious essence of caste in most British representations.

As the following consideration of the censuses of 1871–1872, 1901, and 1941 will demonstrate, the British dedication to the metacategory of religion did not waiver until the end of their rule. By then, Indian identity politics guaranteed that it would not be dropped, even as some Britons fervently wished to do so.

## *The census of 1871–1872*

On January 25, 1872, census enumerators made their way through the streets and *gali*s of Chainpur and its neighboring villages, methodically working down their lists of houses previously numbered as part of the long run-up to this day. With the gradual stifling of the 1857 rebellion—which had exploded with particular force in Shahabad district's northern *pargana*s—and north India relatively in control, the central government moved forward with its first universal census. Most enumerators posed their questions to the patriarch of each house, who responded cagily or candidly according to his manner. Rumors had swirled in the district as to the government's ulterior motives but, if there had been any anxieties among Chainpur's residents, by this day they did not concern many. Already in earlier months, the enumerators had registered each of the village's houses by designating it with a number that they both noted in registers and

painted on each home. Each enumerator also had recorded previously every householder's name and the answers to all the questions on his enumerators' schedule so, when he returned on this, the actual day of the census, he had only to check what he had previously been told.

While adminstrators of the first all-India census crafted a standardized method for enumerators to follow across the subcontinent, they found much more challenging the effort to standardize what happened in the days following the enumeration: the categorization and arrangement of the data collected. Categorical imperatives demanded that the 1871–1872 census distinguish every individual as embodying a distinct religious identity that, in turn, allowed a limited range of caste and tribe identities. Unlike any similar endeavor in South Asian history, the social rank of nearly every individual ideally would be indicated by the census's hierarchized list of groups. Although, pragmatic limitations undermined the realization of such scientistic values, officials nevertheless sought to arrange as many subgroups as possible in the twin trajectories of religious evolution and genealogy.

1872: Chainpur, population 4029[62]

Clearly, this statistical endeavor represented a massive effort in gathering and organizing data, relying heavily on a century's worth of cartographic and ethnographic surveys, even as it mobilized local knowledge brokers. The area's *patwari*s (land registrars), zamindars, and village *chokidar*s (watchmen) aided the effort, supervised by the subdivisional officer. In between the enumerators' visits, the police also had worked their way through Chainpur checking records. Moreover, local officials had been touring the area in their effort to prepare and distribute maps and lists of the villages under their jurisdiction. Officials who doubted the need for such a large apparatus needed only to recall the government's failed attempt to subject just Patna division to a census in 1869. Economic scarcities—likely caused by the preceding years' crop failures that hit Chainpur's *pargana* with particular severity, while smallpox and cholera epidemics also raged—had crippled the effort.[63] As the results rolled in this time, officials in Patna division felt more confident, certainly more so than those in many other areas of Bengal where, among other difficulties, few *patwari*s remained (in part because British suspicions about them led to their dismissal in droves). Mindful as ever of costs, the government avoided paying for as much of this indigenous aid as possible, requiring by law the participation of all whom it impressed into its service, as well as those answering their questions.[64]

Despite the ideal of everyone being counted on the same day, the first attempt at a synchronous, all-India census was neither. In Bengal, the lack of any preexisting census apparatus meant that the final count there happened later than other parts of British India.[65] Meanwhile, at least one provincial government spoke against a simultaneous enumeration throughout India due to the distress it feared such an endeavor would cause

populations unaccustomed to a census.[66] Indeed, the central government omitted Punjab, Oudh, and Berar from the 1871–1872 census since another census following so soon after their recent counts might incite their inhabitants' resistance.[67]

Although period reports indicated fears and resistances to the enumeration itself, as examined at the chapter's end, none mention conflict over the categories used. Because locals provided their own answers without having to conform to a specified list of answers and few had access to earlier census reports that might have alarmed them about their portrayal, concerns in this regard did not appear in the way they would with later generations. The initial instructions for census officials responsible for tabulation and interpretation emphasized the use of religious categories for differentiating Indians and national identities for foreigners:

> The different classes of the population should be carefully distinguished, for instance—
>
> European.
> Eurasian.
> Armenian.
> Parsee.
> Jew.
> Chinese.
> Malay.[68]
> Burmese.
> Seikhs and Goorkhas.
> Mahomedan.
> Hindoo.
> Other castes.
> Miscellaneous.[†††]

The list reflects not only a preference of British officials to identify their own community by region and not religion, but also their uncertainty of how best to descriptively divide a population of nearly 200 million. Geographic and religious affiliations stand alongside one another while "Eurasian" attempts to cope with one boundary-defying group and "Other castes" seeks to manage groups that are claimed to be castes but are not identifiably Hindu. After years of debate, the final census report on Bengal whittled these down to the following categories for the overall population: Hindus, Mahomedans, Buddhists, Christians, and Others. A government of India resolution stated it plainly: "the basis of classification should be religion."[69] Such clarifications notwithstanding, the categorical complexities of the census proved apparent in all four phases of the census: enumeration, categorization, tabulation, and interpretative narration.

Although their instructions required enumerators to record whatever answer householders provided in order to avoid biasing the results, the form of the questionnaire itself

[†††] "Under this head Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Persians, and all Foreigners, may be included."

shaped possible responses by locals and later tabulation by the government. Based on the assumption that only Hindus had caste affiliations, the first census's question about identity asked Chainpur's inhabitants to provide *either* the name of their caste *or* their religion. Yet not all Indians shared the administrators' presumption that anyone who provided a caste by default was a Hindu, as we shall see.

Once the enumerators returned their completed slips to headquarters, the work of categorization quickly began. During the sorting for each metacategory, each enumeration slip was afforded a place in one, and only one, pigeonhole. In this, the first census, the officials registered as Hindu those who answered with a caste name, even if they did not consider themselves "Hindu." For instance, officials likely recorded as Hindu those whose slips read "Brahman Christian" or "Kshatriya Christian," since many Indian Christians maintained a caste identity. Similarly, any Chainpur resident who associated with both Muslim and Mali[‡‡‡] communities would likely have been counted as a Hindu if he answered the question "caste or religion" with "Mali" instead of "Muslim."

While the form of the questionnaire and the sorting of each enumeration slip into one—and only one—pigeonhole imposed the first two constraints on classification, the third stage of tabulation imposed yet another set. The statistical tables of the *Memorandum on the Census of British India of 1871–1872* (1875) offered divisions of religion into category and subcategory, even when the data did not support this. For instance, the tables attempt to identify and provide numbers for the subcategories of each religion, even though the failure of some provinces to provide such details made all-India counts impossible. The memorandum differentiates Muslims into sects (Sunni, Shia, Wahhabi) and then, after a discussion of Hindu castes, delineates five different subcategories of Muslims based on *baradari* (Saiyid, Sheikh, Pathan, Mughal, "Others, or unspecified"). Determined to separate Indians and non-Indians within the Christian category, the tables complements a denominational list (Protestant, Roman Catholic, unrecorded sect) with a racial one (European, non-European, mixed blood). At the same time, the memorandum readily admitted simplifications—such as including Armenians and Greeks in the Protestant count.[70] These constraints demonstrate how the necessary categorical restrictions of statistical comparison—in part forced upon it by ideals of providing a totalistic picture—often became more complicated by government efforts to interlink categories of caste, race, and nation with those of religion.

Many officials understood the limitations and how the assumption of definitive differences between the religious categories, in turn, relied upon a dubious notion of singular, reified religions. H. Beverley, inspector general of registration for Bengal, in his census report for that province acknowledges the complexities such classifications ignored. He admits that no one had yet defined what Hinduism was and that no region better proved

‡‡‡ A community often associated with the work of gardening, flower collecting, and the fashioning of *mala*s, flower garlands.

the intractability of this problem of definition than Lower Bengal. Meanwhile, Beverley also recognizes possible overlaps between Hinduism and Islam. Recalling Buchanan's observation of Hindus and Muslims praying together at the same shrine to the same deity, albeit perhaps using different names, Beverley notes, "The Satya Narain of the Hindu is the Satya Pir of the Bengali Musalman. Instead of commencing a letter 'in the name of God,' the Bengali Musalman will superscribe the name of a Hindu deity. He speaks the same language and uses precisely the same nomenclature and expressions of thought as his Hindu neighbour. Their very names are the same, the prefix of Shaikh alone distinguishing the convert to Islam."[71]

This recognition of shared identities, language, and practices not withstanding, Beverley's report persistently retreats to essentialized characterizations of religions that derive from longstanding stereotypes, thus demonstrating the fourth stage of census operations: the crafting of narratives to interpret the data for readers. For instance, he repeatedly mentions Muslim "conquests with the sword and the Koran." Although he concedes that not all Hindu conversions to Islam resulted from persecution, Beverley imagines that the only other motivating factor must be that quintessential quality of Hinduism: caste. "In Behar it was unsuccessful because Hinduism was strong enough to repel it. In Bengal Hinduism succumbed, and the great mass of the people embraced the faith of Muhammad simply to escape from their ignoble position under the Hindu system."[72] Hence—in a narrative that imagines the two as singular personalities compelled by their inherent and divergent characteristics, a conquest-driven Islam wrestles over Bihar and Bengal's human terrain with a caste-ridden Hinduism in a winner-takes-all contest.

Notions like "Hindooism," "the faith of Muhammad," "the Buddhist creed," and "the Christian religion" in the interpretative reports of the Bengal and Indian governments all exceed the mere counting of those who self-identify as Hindu, Buddhist, or Christian. They connote mutually exclusive traditions and institutions, as well as populations. So devoted was Henry Waterfield, author of the *Memorandum*, to portraying not only the numbers of Indians but also their presumed "faiths," he goes so far as to offer a detailed narrative portrait of "the puritan sect" of the Wahhabis, although "very few persons have returned themselves" as such. Such descriptive elements—that exceeded the empirical data—found in these and subsequent census reports demonstrate how interrelated the statistical, ethnographic, and even morphological modes of comparison were in British India, a quality that sharply distinguishes enumerations there from the censuses the English performed on their own at home.[73] Working together, the quantifications and qualifications of presumed communities reinscribed and legitimated preexisting conclusions about communal differences.

Despite the priority of religion as an analytic metacategory, officials repeatedly encountered trouble disentangling it from other metacategories, especially caste and tribe. In fact, Britons appeared conflicted about whether to treat caste as a subset of religious categories—specifically of "Hindu," though sometimes of "Muslim" as well—or as a

metacategory on par with religion. Ultimately, the Government of India in 1871 determined that the entire population would be religiously subcategorized: Hindus according to caste (except where tribe proved more applicable), Muslims by "tribe," and Christians by "sect," while "others may be shown separately, as Parsees, Brahmos, Buddhists, Jains, &c."[74] C. F. Magrath, deputy inspector general of registration for Bengal, bewailed the confusion regarding Hindu caste, especially as manifest in Bihar. In a memorandum regarding the region, he speculates perhaps a bit wistfully that a simple alphabetical list of the various castes would have been "more satisfactory" way of subdividing Hindus. "It was, however, necessary," Magrath laments, "to attempt some sort of classification." Endeavoring to do so, however, requires him to distinguish castes from tribes, which demands that he differentiate Hindus from "aboriginals" and, to do *that*, he concocts an in-between category—"semi-Hinduised aboriginals"—in response to the platypus syndrome surrounding the issue. The division is one of convenience and Magrath admits that between these three groups "in fact, no line whatever exists." Nevertheless, having managed the issue of tribes by compiling two alphabetized inventories—"aboriginals" and "semi-Hinduised aboriginals"—to which we will return below, he moves on to the matter of organizing caste lists.

Magrath's lament reflects how establishing relationships between categories could be considered inherent to the endeavor of classification. In their effort to discern a presumed hierarchy underlying the caste "system," administrators eschewed a merely alphabetical list of all reported castes, just as botanists and zoologists busied themselves with taxonomies that reflected the underlying structural relations among living creatures they catalogued. British officials, despite evidence suggesting their inadequacy for describing contemporary groups but bereft of any other system claiming universal applicability, turned to the fourfold categorical and ranking system promoted by the Brahmanic, Sanskrit text *Manavadharmasastra*. So, for instance, Magrath settles on a system based on status ranking, and finds himself unable to shake Manu's legacy. Although he attempts to dismiss the ancient text's four divisions as meaningless in the face of observations that trouble any absolute ranking of status, Magrath nevertheless capitulates and organizes his list with Brahmans first, followed by Rajputs (whom he considers synonymous with Manu's Kshatriyas), then intermediately ranked castes, and finally castes associated with specific professions such as artisans and laborers.[75] Waterfield, in his memorandum on India-wide operations, also noted the problem inherent in not having a uniform plan for arranging caste classifications. After referring to Beverley's observation that Bengal's castes and tribes number up to a thousand, and their subdivisions into the "many thousands," he notes that the Bombay census report relied upon "the usual fourfold division" of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras.[76] Officials for the all-India census appeared to concur with the organizers of the 1867 Berar census who had yielded to Manu rather than face classificatory chaos: "For the Hindoos the old Vedic division into four great castes has been maintained, simply because no better could be found, though, in fact, only the Brahmins have kept up the demarcation."[77] Although an encyclopedic, alphabetical

listing of every caste name was an option, the urge to make the comparison meaningful beyond the merely statistical listing of populations meant that administrators had to establish an abbreviated set of categories into which to sort and hierarchize individual caste groups. Meanwhile, another factor worked against simply listing the name of every caste and subcaste, even if such an approach might seem to best satisfy the scientistic, totalizing principle: the financial practicalities of tabulation forbade it. Therefore, Beverley's census report listed only a few score castes for all of Bengal.[78]

Religion and caste proved difficult to disentangle not only from one another, but also from the metacategory of tribe. In regard to Muslims, the distinction between the *baradari*s (groups) of the *ashraf* (the collection of Saiyid, Shaikh, Pathan, and Mughal groups) and the *zat*s or *ajlaf* (caste-like groups occasionally associated with specific occupations) caused particular consternation. While the *zat*s appeared to function like castes (although often without ritual or intermarriage restrictions), a group like the Saiyids defined themselves through genealogy alone, in this case through supposed descent from the Prophet Muhammad's family. In Waterfield's *Memorandum*, confusion clearly reigns with the multiplicity of subcategories that tabulators cannot delineate with taxonomical precision or cross reference easily. He notes of Muslims, "The caste system . . . partakes rather of the nature of a tribal classification than of the exclusive character of what is commonly termed caste." He adds, "The figures do not, in most of the provinces, correspond with those shewn as Mahomedans under the heading of Religion, some of the tribes being classed among those who are not natives of India, while the Christians and others of Mahomedan origin, but not professing that religion, have in some cases been included in the statement according to nationality and caste."[79]

Collaborating Waterfield's narrative, the census report's numbers also demonstrate the inability of officials to adequately classify the overall population. In the statistical table for the Muslim category, the four *ashraf baradari*s collectively number about seven million, but the "others, or unspecified" subcategory number almost five times that.[80] The unwillingness to disaggregate the last subcategory likely resulted from the character of the enumerator's schedule that, as mentioned above, only allowed the recording of "Hindu" castes. Although castes were disallowed Muslims, the *ashraf baradari*s seemed to fit the "race and tribe" question, which followed the "religion or caste" query. The tabulators undoubtedly knew of Muslim subgroups other than the *ashraf*, but did not have the data necessary to precisely number them. Therefore, an enumerator might record a Muslim householder who identified herself as Saiyid as "Muslim" in religion and "Saiyid" in tribe, yet record as "Hindu" in religion a neighboring Muslim who identified himself as "Mali." Ultimately, those claiming to belong to categorically unambiguous groups like Hindu castes and Muslim races or tribes got counted, while those belonging to categories that appeared to confuse the two, like Muslim *zat*s, were more likely overlooked. Tabulators and other administrators admitted to the confusing overlaps in their reports, but in the statistical tables—the most publicized information—no overlaps existed.

The issue of tribes brought its own confusion to categorization and tabulation efforts. As mentioned above, Beverley sought (unsuccessfully) to categorically distinguish tribes from Hindus. His solution relied upon a maddening intersection of race, nationality, and religion metacategories, as a passage from his report regarding Hinduism demonstrates:

> The ring of the true metal is wanting. The coin has been adulterated and debased. And the cause of this, they [who study this phenomenon] go on to say, is due to contamination from aboriginal sources. Hinduism has been lowered from its purer *type* in order to meet the necessities of the indigenous tribes among whom it made its home. Its Pantheon has been crowded with elephant gods and bloodthirsty goddesses, of whom the Aryans knew nothing, but who have been adopted into the Hindu system to win the goodwill and reconcile the superstitions of a wild and devil-worshipping race. And just as we find in the present day tribes in every stage of civilisation, so does the Hindu religion in Bengal assume a Protean form, from the austere rites practiced by the shaven pundits of Nuddea to the idol-worship of the semi-barbarous Boona.[81] [my emphasis]

Beverley suffers this frustration because he knows his science demands distinct boundaries between the classifications "Hindu" and "tribal"—classifications, here referred to as types, reliant on the nontrivial characteristics of a pure and distinctive essence—whereas the confusing facts on the ground appeared to militate against this clarity. Not only does the passage illustrate how religion, tribe, race, and nationality defied contemporary efforts of differentiation, it also demonstrates how classification can bequeath hierarchy, and hierarchy can prompt narration.

As mentioned earlier, classification systems not only provide classes to sort individual datum, they also arrange these classes relative to one another. By doing so, the systems establish—implicitly or explicitly—a relationship between classes. As statistician Ramkrishna Mukherjee has argued, these relationships may create hierarchies of value that originate in the ideology of those who create the categorical system.[82] In his statement, Beverley delineates not only specific classes of religion/tribe/race/nationality, but their relation to one another. On the one hand, he includes "original" Hinduism as among the pure Aryan type and, on the other, establishes tribals as a devil-worshiping type. The obviously high valuation of Aryan Hinduism is signposted by its "lowered" status resulting from its contact with the aborigines that "debased" its pure form. The key to this classificatory system, then, rests in a teleology of religious evolution related to the Christianity of medieval and early modern western Europe, which quartered humanity into pagans, Jews, Saracens, and Christians. The biblical narrative made clear that the idol-worshipers preceded the Abrahamic covenant, which had elevated the Jews who were, in turn, subordinate to the true Christian faith that they failed to embrace. Islam represented variously a return to idolatry, a heresy, or the work of the Antichrist. As

Beverley's language testifies, the hierarchal organization of religious categories of the census of 1871–1872 carries the valuative connotations of early modern theology, although reframed in the paradigm of secular science and expressed in terms of social evolution.[83]

## *The census of 1901*

A total of 1,325,000 enumerators visited nearly all the homes in British India on the night of March 1, 1901. Under the direction of more than one hundred thousand supervisors, they counted 294,266,701 individuals. Workers recorded each person's information on a paper slip but now—in a departure from previous practice—each slip materially indicated the most basic categories. Although each province decided for itself which indicators to use so that, for instance, sex might be denoted by the slip's shape and marital condition by a printed symbol, throughout the Indian empire, officials uniformly used differently colored paper to indicate various religions in order to ease their tabulation.[84] Although by 1901 the government placed increasing emphasis on making accurate counts of caste, religion remained the more basic metacategory. A disproportionate concern for Christians and Christianity demonstrated how the numbers never spoke for themselves, but gained or lost in importance depending on the exertion of contemporary interests. Meanwhile, by this, the fourth census, the all-Indian enumeration had met with such critical acclaim and official sanction that disciplinary specialists and learned societies beseeched the government to use it as a platform to launch (and pay for) a new state-run knowledge project.

Over the course of three previous censuses, the government refined what it intended as a "religion" while remaining aware of the difficulties in its definition. In contrast with the 1871–1872 census that required enumerators to record whatever they had been told, the instructions for 1901 told them to choose for themselves the category of religion that the individual's answer best matched, whether it be Hindu, Mussulman, Jain, Christian, et cetera.[86] It was left to each province to decide for itself whether or not to ask individuals to subclassify their religion, and only two provinces did, although some like Bengal directed enumerators to ask about membership in specific sects that posed a concern for the state. Hence, in some Bengal provinces they asked, "Are you a Gauranga?"[§§§] while in others they queried about membership in particular Muslim sects.[87]

1901: Chainpur, population 2870[85]

Although the central government decided against requiring sectarian information from all Indians, census officials decided to specifically pursue more detailed information on Christians through a variety of special labors. First, in order to better ensure that native

§§§ Gauranga is another name for Chaitanya, around whom a Vaishnava devotional movement developed.

Christians could provide an answer regarding their denominations (an endeavor that presumed Europeans and Eurasians needed no coaching), officials prompted missionaries to instruct natives who might otherwise not answer "properly." This had attendant classificatory problems, partly compounded by issues of economy of space in the census reports similar to those faced during the 1871-1872 census in regard to caste lists. So, some answers had to be recategorized during tabulation to minimalize the necessary taxa.[****] This meant recording "Protestant" as "Anglican Communion," "Heathen (convert)" among "Minor denominations," and "Independent" as "Congregationalist." Ironically, those Christians who informed enumerators that they eschewed sectarian division were entered as also belonging to "Minor denominations." Meanwhile, as a foreshadowing of religious politics to come, some Evangelical and Nonconformist clergy in Bombay approached H. H. Risley (d. 1911), the all-India census commissioner, to suggest reducing Christian categories to just "Catholic" and "Protestant" so as "to simplify matters and promote the cause of Christian unity." They also protested against the label "Native Christian," which they considered "derogatory."[88] Indigenous concerns about the impact of census classifications were growing, even as Risley ignored these specific ones.

The involvement of missionaries in fostering more accurate returns among native Christians reflects census officials' exceptional engagement with them. The descriptive report for India pays particular attention to missionaries and proselytization, while the statistical report offers details disproportionate to the strength of Christian numbers relative to non-Christians. In contrast with their section on each other religion, the authors of the descriptive report give no space to explaining the beliefs and practices of Christians, assuming their audience needs none. Instead, most of the five-page section describing them (compare this to the half-page paragraph afforded the roughly same population of Sikhs) focuses on Christian population increases from conversion. Meanwhile, the quoted report by the United Provinces census superintendent concludes that the relapses of converts back to Hindu practices "constitute a serious problem for the future."[89] The provision of a double-page, fold-out, color map portraying Christian populations contrasts with the small, grayscale, in-text maps of animist, Hindu, Muslim, and Jain populations and suggests an administrative interest in Christian growth far out of proportion with the Christian population.

If the religion section of the 1901 census report offered Christians disproportionate attention, the caste section compensated with near complete omission. Despite ample evidence of caste distinctions among Indian Christians, the descriptive report makes no such mention and the statistical report—in the "Caste, Tribe, Race, or Nationality" table—records that out of millions of Christians, only one declared a caste.[††††] Census

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**** A list of seventeen denominations was compiled, and a listing for "Denomination not returned."

†††† He identified himself as a Chuhra (also known as Bhangi, a caste associated with sweeping). In addition, thirty-one Christians identified themselves as Chinese and ten as Madrasi in this table. Every other Christian indicated on this table fell into only one of two categories: "Minor and Unspecified" (405,354) and "Native and Indian Christian" (2,239,247). Risley and Gait 1903b, 280, 296, 312.

officials apparently preferred to delineate Christians in different ways than they did the other religions, using seventeen denominations and three races (Native, Eurasian, and European and Allied Races). Clearly, the ideals of systematically portraying the Indian population had bent before the ideals of Christian unity (as Risley's interlocutors had put it) that eschewed caste as one of the most odious features Hindu converts left behind, despite the fact that, as historian Robert Frykenberg has argued, Indian Christians seldom entirely lost their caste identities.[90] In contrast, the census recognized that India's caste "contagion has spread even to Muhammadans" despite the similarly ideal objection to caste divisions made by many Muslims.[91] Apparently, the British administrators of the census viewed Christian denominationalism as a matter of everyday fact, Muslim casteism as a measure of Islam's Hinduization, and (among proselytizers) Christian casteism as an admission of a minor blemish on an overall success.

However troublesome recording the religious identity of most Indians proved for enumerators, the religion of the tribes offered even greater difficulty. The 1901 census report for India began the descriptive part of its religion chapter by hesitantly declaring, "The oldest of the religions recorded in the Census, if indeed it can be called a religion at all, is the medley of heterogeneous and uncomfortable superstitions now known by the not entirely appropriate name of Animism." Officials instructed enumerators that tribe members who declared themselves neither Hindu, nor Muslim, nor Christian, nor offered a name for their religion, should be declared as Animist. Justifying the term, the report's authors reflect on two and a half centuries of European scholarship and nomenclature debates before determining that with this word, "We have passed from the superficial to the essential, from the casual impression of traders and travellers to the mature conclusions of a skilled observer."[92] We shall consider in the concluding chapter the important implications of this deference to the scientific specialist.

While religion and tribe posed great categorical challenges, those of caste appeared insurmountable. Already in 1891, the then census commissioner reckoned data on castes more difficult to manage than that for any other component other than occupations. The question of their scientific classification was debated in congresses of the International Statistical Institute. Some provinces suggested omitting the question on caste, but others such as Bengal sought to retain it. Arguments were made that caste data gave insight into the Brahmanizing of aborigines and contributed information on the issues (perpetually concerning Britons) of widow and infant marriage.[93] Although caste would remain among the census questions, opinions still flourished as to how to best classify the resulting data. In 1881, the second census administration had dumped Manu's categories,[94] settling for a different four-staged listing.[‡‡‡‡]

[‡‡‡‡] The final list omitted a listing for "Muhammadan tribes," which officials had considered.

I.—Brahmins.
II.—Rajputs.
III.—Other Hindu castes.
IV.—Non-Hindu or aboriginal castes and tribes.[95]

Anthropologist Bernard Cohn has outlined the earlier census efforts to manage caste data, which included an 1881 attempt to standardize caste names and control for the local and regional variations. In an effort to order castes according to an assumed, relative ranking of social prestige, the census commissioner for Bengal turned to Sanskrit scholar Rajendra Lal Mitra to produce a list. Turning aside groups' claims to merit inclusion as Brahmans or Rajputs, he determined that the census should not adjudicate such contentions, but just follow the "textbooks of the Hindus."[96] As Risley prepared for his ethnographic survey of Bengal's tribes and castes, he sought information on caste ranking by social prescedent. Many of his correspondents were, like Mitra, Brahmans who anchored their responses in Brahmanic texts and, occasionally, European works.[97]

One reason caste caught the British imagination (other than that, perhaps, it appeared to offer an even more extreme example of social stratification than their own class system) was the hope it engendered of linking those three great metacategorical concerns: religion, caste, and race. This anticipation became particularly obvious in the 1901 census as ethnological science swelled in promise—even as parts of the census report took a more cautious approach—and a spinoff to the census was proposed to pursue it. In the minds of some, the perceived endogamy and immutability of caste groups promised insights into race because they minimalized the genetic intermixings that invariably "diluted" the pure, original stock of "Aryan," "Dravidian," and other groups. Risley and Bengal census superintendent E. A. Gait believed they had proven that race provided the basis of caste prestige once they established a correlation between the physical qualities (e.g., the broadness of the nose) of the most prestigious castes and those of Aryans. Indeed, the English word "caste" itself—applied first to inhabitants along India's western coastline by early Portuguese visitors—derives from the Latin *castus*, used by Europeans to imply purity of breed. Although, the authors necessarily recognized the myriad exceptions to their theory—with some castes deriving from tribal groups, migration populations, religious sectarianism, or custom changes—and the fact that it did not accord with indigenous views, their solution was to have each province arrange the caste groups in a general manner and, then, launch the Ethnographic Survey of India (ESI) in pursuit of more probing investigations.[98]

Risley had previously promoted the idea of the ESI after concluding that the scientific classification of the population might be impossible without physical measurements of the primary castes and tribes, which might also help determine their origins.[99] Hence, Risley had settled for an alphabetical listing of the castes in his four-volume *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (1891), based on an earlier Bengal caste survey.[100] Bolstered by a petition from the British Association for the Advancement of Science

(BAAS) that the next census should include ethnography and anthropometry, he obtained permission from the Government of India to commence the Ethnographic Survey of India with the census of 1901.[101] By helping overcome the government's rebuff of a similar proposal made in 1890,[102] the BAAS demonstrated how learned societies—connected via a web of officials, scholars, and lay people—shared information and promoted new knowledge projects, as we shall explore more thoroughly in chapter 7.

Risley's classificatory technique for 1901 represented a marked departure from the 1871–1872 census effort in its endeavor to fix each caste's position relative to others based on a series of ethnographic questions. These asked individuals about their group's occupations, food prohibitions, employment of Brahmans, remarriage restrictions, and choice of "lowest" caste with whom they eat, drink, and smoke.[103] The ESI's conclusions were not without disagreement. One group, for example, objected to a provincial census official's decision to classify them as Vaisyas since they portrayed themselves as in the same class as Rajputs. Not only did Risley not worry overly about such pubic objections in regard to his conclusions, he welcomed them as "the best evidence of the general success of the experiment" to properly identify and order the castes. The fact that so many Hindus took the time and paid the cost of filing petitions and memorials protesting their caste classifications proved to Risley the comprehensibility of his system, since they served the basic principle "that the sole test of social precedence prescribed was native public opinion."[104] These attitudes on the part of officials and civilians reflect how this ethnographic project (among others) depended in no small part upon an English-educated class of Indians who recognized and sought to manage the power of government knowledge projects and classifications. It demonstrated how Britain's coalescing epistemic hegemony drew Indians, even as some of them protested, into participation by reshaping—even if not exactly in European forms—the dominant paradigms of social knowledge and by providing legitimate realms of discourse and contestation between groups and the state. Clearly, Risley relied upon the activity of the public sphere to sharpen the results of his findings.

In this and other ways, the census administration demonstrated how the government viewed statistics that it generated as no longer intended for it alone, but also for the public—both in Britain and in India. In his preface to the *Report of the Census of 1891*, the census commissioner noted that the inclusion of explanatory material "becomes advisable as soon as a public is approached that has no experience of what is to us in India a matter of every day observation."[105] The government increasingly dispatched complimentary copies of the reports to universities, select newspapers, public libraries, learned societies, and Christian leaders throughout India. By 1931, the Bihar government's distribution list included the newspapers *Indian Nation*, *Young Utkal*, *Patna Times*, and *Hindustan Review* as well as the Associated Press in Patna, the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, four public libraries, the Anglican bishop of Chota Nagpur, and the Roman Catholic bishop of Patna.[106] Some Indians quite quickly perceived the classificatory

power of the all-Indian census and sought to work it in their favor. Already in 1881, the senior census commissioner had received letters from individuals throughout the country expressing their belief that "the social position and status of the caste to which they belong may be regulated and fixed by the classification adopted in the census forms."[107] And well Indians should recognize this power, given that—beyond their work on the enumerations—census and provincial officials published most of the significant scholarship on caste between 1880 and 1950.[108] This was apparent early on, when Sir Denzil Ibbetson and Risley each published influential accounts of caste based on their work as census commissioners in their respective provinces of Punjab and Bengal.[109] However, the increasing attention from Indians prompted a rising concern among officials over Indian reception of the census, as seen in the decision not to apply G. A. Grierson's newly contrived linguistic classifications to the census data. Demonstrating that not all welcomed public controversy in regard to government categorizations, a few officials feared that because some linguistic classifications would not appear familiar to readers, the government would, in the words of one administrator, "lay ourselves open to the imputation of having manufactured a number of new languages, no trace of which is disclosed by the census."[110]

The Government of India also disseminated copies of its tables and narrations abroad: to foreign correspondents, to the statistic offices of foreign governments, and to learned societies. American traveller Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore offers a sordid demonstration of how census statistics, abstraction, and public access could play out when, in 1903, she wrote, "One easily believes the census figures, and sees how the frightful problem of overpopulation besets the empire; how necessary, almost, are plague and famine, in lieu of wars, to reduce the swarms and herds of these lank, inert, torpid, half-fed, half-clothed, half-alive Bengalis."[111] Scidmore's comment demonstrates how, its narrative reports notwithstanding, the census communicated most powerfully through its numbers. For those who did not wish to labor through the technical language of the report (if they even had access to it), the volumes with statistical tables offered the numerical data, albeit with the disadvantages outlined by Jonathan Z. Smith. In contrast with Risley's and Gait's narrative deliberations in their respective reports regarding the nature of hypergamy and endogamy within various Muslim subgroups, the 1901 census tables list them simply as "castes," with seventeen given for Shahabad district's Muslims (including "Fakir") and fifty-eight for Hindus.[112] Meanwhile, the tables helped assert the prominence of religion—not only as a primary field of information, but also as a ubiquitous categorical cross-referent—and thus reinforced notions of its centrality to Indian society. Of the forty-three different tables in the main statistical volume, ten rely on religion as a category of analysis, nine on race, and six on caste.

Nicolas Dirks perhaps best sums up Risley's legacy, reinforcing our overall theme of the often-overlooked confluences of science and religion in British representations of India: "Because of his single-minded obsessions with the racial origins of caste, he married his own late-nineteenth-century version of scientific empiricism with the powerful

combination of early-nineteenth-century orientalist knowledge and the clerical Brahmanical opinion that permeated the middle echelons of colonial administration in the localities."[113] In other words, Risley helped instantiate a Brahmanic anthropology using the census: scientistic in form, yet religious in ideology. Simultaneously, and in no small consequence due to the endeavors of government to communicate census findings to the public, Indians became increasingly aware that their communities only became visible to the government when of adequate size, so that the "numerical majorities" commanded the most attention. This would have fateful consequences for the politics of census classification in the next decades of the new century.[114]

## *The census of 1941*

Recognizing the significance of the census to British rule, the Non-Cooperation Movement sought to disrupt census operations in 1921 and 1931. Literate Indians who served as enumerators proved less inclined to help (at least without pay), while direct opposition erupted in specific cities and regions[115] with some protesters erasing the enumeration numbers written on homes.[116] Although he sanctioned the 1921 census at the last moment, a decade later Mohandas Gandhi timed a salt march to coincide with the beginning of census operations, while Indian National Congress leaders declared a boycott of participation.[117] Yet, by 1941, more Indians showed concern for the proper execution of the census than any year before, though they debated about what "proper" entailed. The census had always served political interests, but with the development of mass participatory politics, its operation became a matter of debate not only among census and other government officials but increasingly among the general population. Ironically, the very categorical gaps between Hindu and Muslim that the British epistemic order had helped widen now served the rhetoric of Hindu nationalists and Muslim separatists at a time when British officials sought to jettison the religion question from the census altogether.

Key changes had transformed the census by 1941. First, from 1921 onward, administrative interests had shifted from the ethnographic to the economic,[119] so census questions likewise changed, giving more emphasis to questions bearing on livelihood, industry, and reproduction rates. Second, the government's immediate budgetary concerns, overshadowed by the world war, led to new efficiencies in the project. Instead of local governments creating specific enumeration slips appropriate to their idiosyncratic interests, a single form served all of British India.[120] Moreover, the single-night enumeration was abandoned. But what some government members considered the most important change to pursue was one that many in the population pressured them to avoid: the dropping of a question on religion.

> 1921: Chainpur, population 2545[118]

"I myself would have been glad to omit the religion question altogether and replace it by a straightforward question on community." So wished M. W. M. Yeatts, census commissioner for British India's 1941 survey. To his disappointment, however, he realized that jettisoning the religion question was not so easy. Yeatts preferred a different category, which would avoid "the factious and undesirable aspect of treating religion as the basis of social data"[121] and which he called "true social community."[122] He pressed his point in the context of a debate sparked by the Bihar government that sought to address a persistent problem in the recording of tribal responses—a difficulty that demonstrates how religious identification had simultaneously become a hot-button issue for many Indians even when (in fact, *because*) the category meant nothing to other Indians. As we have seen, since the first census in 1871–1872, officials had argued how to classify tribal groups in terms of religion. The Government of Bihar, with its unusually large population of Adivasis, decided in 1931 to make more of an effort to record Christian tribal converts in the tables for tribes, since most did not give a caste identity to enumerators and, therefore, disappeared from caste tables.[123] In preparation for the following census, the provincial government decided on another effort to better count tribals. For sixty years, the default had been to instruct enumerators to list someone's tribe if they offered no answer to the question "What is your religion?" Instead, fearing that a disproportionate number of Adivasis would be recorded as Hindu by their inability to understand the question, the government required that an additional question be asked about holidays the respondent might observe. If the individual responded positively to observing Sarhul, or another well-known Adivasi festival, then "tribal religion"[§§§§] would be the answer recorded. If not, then she would be asked if she observed Baqr Id, Diwali, or Christmas, with the supposedly corresponding identity noted.

While the controversy of how to categorize tribal religion had roiled census officials for decades, much of Bihar's impulse for a change derived both from efforts by Hindu organizations to claim all Adivasis as Hindu and from resistance by Muslim groups to the same. As the British increasingly allowed Indians to fashion forms of representative government, the value of majority status grew.[124] Prospective Indian politicians sought census data for clues as to potential constituencies, which reinforced the views of some that identifying a Hindu constituency and advocating for their presumed interests would capture most of the population. It was not long before some Muslims viewed these developments with alarm and responded in kind since some of the issues Hindu-dominated groups—such as the Indian National Congress (f. 1885)—pursued (e.g., cow-protection) were directly counter to the interests of many Muslims. Such concerns propelled the formation of the Muslim League in 1906. Soon enough, the League began promoting separate electorates with representation of religious communities proportionate to

[§§§§] "Animism" had been jettisoned in favor of "tribal religion" in the 1921 all-Indian census following debates about the actual beliefs of communities categorized as such. See *Census of India, 1921* 1924, 110–111.

population size as protection against a Hindu political majority. The success of this effort in 1909—an outcome greatly facilitated by H. H. Risley in his role as home secretary[125]—quickened the turmoil in communal politics.

Meanwhile, the advent of reserved seats for government employment expanded attention to religious enumerations, since some Indians now energetically pursued careful and continual communal accounting. So, for instance, the Sikh Liberal Association complained when a Hindu candidate in the exam for ministerial service, Alim Chand, converted to Sikhism and sought to take an appointment reserved for Sikhs. Hand-wringing government officials were left to determine at what point the man had stopped being Hindu and had become a Sikh.[126] Impelled by jealous members of the different communities, the Government of India in 1941 required "communal returns" for the Geological Survey of India, Archæological Department, Zoological Survey of India, and Home Department, as well as the Census of India itself. The same year, the Government of Bihar used the census to report the distribution of government positions among Hindu, Buddhist, and animist castes (which, in contrast with the 1901 census, were listed alphabetically, not according to a speculative status ranking).[127]

Many organizations formed to represent religious interests in this new political milieu. By 1920, Shahabad district had seventeen religious organizations (as well as three caste organizations).[128] Many of these joined others across India in following the census closely, scouring former reports and tracking future developments. So, in the two years preceding the 1941 census, at least twenty-seven Indian organizations wrote complaints to the Government of India about the planned depiction of religion in the upcoming enumeration, often quoting verbatim previous results.[129] Most of these petitions complained of an injustice committed against their religious community in the execution of the census. Many alleged that certain agents sought to skew householders' answers in the hopes of inflating the numbers of their own community. As events in Shahabad district proved, there was reason for mistrust. In 1921, census officials confirmed that Hindu enumerators underreported new converts in a Methodist mission due to a combination of pressure from landlords, influence of an Arya Samaj missionary, and some enumerators' own inclinations.[130]

The involvement of the Arya Samaj was not incidental and represented one of many efforts by communal organizations to influence the census's conduct. The Hindu Mahasabha made frequent complaints regarding enumerations, as when Bhai Parmananda (the Mahasabha's vice president) and M. S. Aney (president of the allied Hindu League and member of the Legislative Assembly) met with Yeatts and the home member of the Government of India in a successful bid to block Bihar's tribal proposal for the 1941 census. Tellingly, Parmananda and Aney also advocated against the decision not to record sects that year, suggesting the importance of counting the number of Shia and Sunni among Muslims, Catholics and Protestants among Christians, and—most significantly—Sikhs and Buddhists among Hindus.[131] This last suggestion reflects their efforts to co-opt

the census as part of a broader strategy to swell their numbers by incorporating Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and Adivasis as Hindu.***** Meanwhile, while the All India Shia Conference argued successfully to have Shia and Sunni distinguished in the Bihar and Orissa census reports,[132] a significant number of Bihari Shia objected to the same. By resolutely answering "Musalman" to the question of religion, these Shia sought to use the census to further a Shia-Sunni rapprochement then underway and undermine statistical partitions among Muslims.[133]

In light of such contentions, the option of simply not asking the religion question appealed to the intemperate Yeatts, who favored posing only the question of "race, tribe or caste." The government clearly sought to minimize the appearance of their interest in religion. For example, in neither of two press releases sanctioned by the government in 1939 and 1940 to inform the public about the upcoming enumeration was anything more than a passing mention made of religion as a subject of inquiry. Instead, each announcement emphasized the economic and reproduction issues at play.[134] Nevertheless, although Yeatts preferred not to *ask* about religion, he still intended to *collect information* on it. To wit, he proposed that officials would employ a method somewhat akin to what was used in 1871–1872: no one would be queried about their religion, but anyone answering the "race, tribe or caste" question with a caste would be counted as Hindu, with a Muslim tribe as Muslim, with an aborigine tribe as tribal religion, and so on.[135] Even endeavors by its highest official to free the census from the weight of religion could not shake the inertia the question held within the government, much less among the public.

Overall, therefore, the debates about categorizing tribals pitted two impulses long at play in census operations: to simply record answers given by respondents and to educate the population how to identify themselves. On the one hand, the Government of India's reluctance to change the enumeration routine reflected their view that the census merely recorded what each individual responded and allowed each the liberty to declare the religion of her or his choice (an idealistic stance given that the *householder*—usually male—was interviewed by the enumerator and, by law, women could not be compelled to answer for themselves). On the other hand, administrators recognized that not everyone understood the categories with which they were expected to identify. Hence, the Government of Bihar observed in 1940 that although "everybody should fully understand the meaning of the questions that are put to him . . . The average aboriginal who adheres in the main to his old tribal beliefs and religious rites would *not* ordinarily understand the simple question: 'What is your religion?'"[136]

Ironically, even as government officials recognized the artificiality of the identities they required some groups to declare, they no longer controlled the process of selecting those

***** The next year, twenty-two Brahmans signed a letter claiming—on their authority as pandits—"The so-called aborigines are Hindus 'fallen' from their original status owing to some misdeeds, as recorded in many of our Shastras." Letter from Chandidas Nyaya-Tarkatirtha et al. to the Census Officer, Government of India. April 15, 1941. Home Department. F. 45/11/41-Pub. 1941. NAI.

identities because the categories of belonging had become so politicized by an increasingly involved public. One impatient administrator, commenting on this debate, abdicated the state's responsibility to sectarian parties: "To avoid the possibility of inaccurate and ignorant replies the Associations interested in the Adi-bashis [*sic*] (aborigines) should teach them what the question means and what the accurate reply should be."[137] In regard to the census, religion had become both too central to political and social discourse to reject now and too complicated for the government to explain easily to the population. And so Yeatts reconciled himself to the fact that the census needed the tribal religion question not for its own sake (indeed, on this topic he concluded, "The religion return in respect of tribes has never been anything but worthless"),[138] but for fear of alienating enough Hindus as to imperil the census's success.[139] The Government of India's concern regarding public perception extended to the census report itself, and Yeatts was directed to moderate his depiction of the census's vulnerability to Punjab's "communal frenzy," since administrators feared this would cause "embarrassing notice to be taken in the Legislature."[140]

Similar dynamics played out for caste as well. Despite government proposals to drop caste in 1901 and 1920—based on arguments that the census both was perpetuating caste sentiment and was inaccurate (as some castes passed themselves off as higher ones)—the category remained. However, fewer numbers of castes were listed in the 1921 all-India census report than in 1911,[141] while the 1931 Bihar report further slimmed its caste figures.[142] As with religion, government interest in comprehensive reporting of caste statistics waned as popular determination to be recorded rose. As described by historians Gyanendra Pandey and Vinita Damodaran, Shahabad district provided an important example of caste agitation in the form of the Gwala Movement, as the Ahir caste[†††††] there joined with caste members elsewhere in Bihar in an effort to raise their social position. Besides the men wearing the sacred thread and women living in purdah, this "uplift" campaign included demanding Kshatriya status[143] and responding to government queries with the name "Gwala" instead of "Ahir."[144] However, after they encountered caste and class oppression from the groups that they formerly had sought to join, the Gwalas in Shahabad joined with Koeries and Kurmis in 1934 to forge the Triveni Sangh. All of this represented a late example of the wave of caste movements and associations, which included efforts to change caste names, and which already had crested and was on the ebb by the first decade of the twentieth century.[145] Meanwhile, another relabeling occurred on the level of government, as the Government of India decided in 1936 to jettison the term "depressed castes" in favor of "scheduled castes,"[146] by which the most marginalized castes collectively are known today. The 1941 census divided Hindus into scheduled castes and others as categories on the communities table,[147] even as officials debated the utility of a uniform, all-Indian list of scheduled

[†††††] A caste often associated with herding. Their participation in vicious attacks against Muslims during Shahabad's cow-protection riots of 1917 offered Gwalas an opportunity to assert their upper caste status while acting in league with Bhumihar, Brahman, and Rajput zamindars. Tomlinson 2010. See also Damodaran 1990.

castes when "backwardness" varied from region to region.[148] Ultimately, caste would provide another manifestation of the identity politics that precipitated a hasty British withdrawal from the subcontinent.

As communal politics accelerated, the impulse to define an essential Hindu and Muslim identity gained popular momentum throughout north India. The congruence between religion and caste that so many Britons had presumed found vocal expression among many Indians during the 1941 census. Throughout Bengal and to a lesser degree elsewhere, in an attempt to convey the perfect unity of Hinduism, many Hindus refused to answer the question on caste. The census commissioner's reproving response that "a natural social unit need not be a source of weakness or division" naively ignored the political power with which demographic blocs had become invested (and overlooked British concerns about showing Christian denominational divisions to Indians, as discussed in chapter 3).[149] Meanwhile, similar arguments for reductionist identities occurred in north India in regard to language, as some Muslims used Urdu to project an essentialized, distinct identity apart from Hindus, many of whom used Hindi in much the same manner. For instance, Muslim enumerators in Bihar not only demanded to have their instructions printed in Urdu—instead of Hindi, the customary official language in the province—but they also recorded their answers in the Arabo-Persian script of that language, which meant that most Hindi-literate workers used to the Devanagari script could not read them.[150]

The sharpening communal politics of north India increasingly conflated religion, caste/tribe/*baradari*, and language into identities not only essentialized and singular, but also mutually defining through antithesis. Hence, some Hindus viewed themselves as indigenous and Sanskrit-rooted relative to the invading, Perso-Arabic-influenced Muslims, while some Muslims took the Urdu sophistications of their minority culture as a measure of their disproportionate contribution to India in contrast with the oppressive aggressions of the Hindu majority. Deepening dichotomization erased places of identity overlap, as when Muslim Rajputs reclassified themselves as Pathans, discarding the title "Singh" that they had shared with Hindu Rajputs in favor of "Khan." Simultaneously, lower status groups tried to crowd the upper ranks of their declared religious community, as low-prestige Muslim *zat*s sought the honorific title "Shaikh"[151] and some ill-positioned Hindu *jati*s preferred "Singh." The energetic investments by Indians into the census classification and enumeration project could hardly be better demonstrated than by the response of many caste groups to government demands that if they wanted the results of the caste question from the 1941 census tabulated, they had to pay for it themselves—in advance. In Bihar, eight caste associations paid for exactly that,[152] with Bihar's raja of Darbhanga contributing in order to know the number of Maithili Brahmans and Maithili speakers.[153] The culmination of this self-classificatory process operating in the context of nationalist fervor would perpetuate a final conflation: the association of these binary conflations with essentially Muslim and Hindu/Sikh territories. This can be seen as the triumph of what Arvind-Pal S. Mandair calls a "mono-theo-lingualism," by which he calls

attention to ideals attempting the mutual imbrication of a singular religion and monolingualism in order to establish a homogenous nation.[154]

Ultimately, most of this controversy about religion was for naught given that the government decided to severely restrict tabulation for political and financial reasons, and so little of the census data was published. While householders still answered all queries on the questionnaire, officials often did not collate their answers regarding religion and caste. Nevertheless, this data served a fateful role in providing the raw material used by the Radcliffe Commission in the 1947 partitioning of India and Pakistan, which required differentiating Muslim-majority areas from Hindu- and Sikh-dominated areas. Therefore, economic constraints reinforced British concerns to minimize controversy, and Yeatts made the decision "during the difficult enumeration year of keeping a stormy atmosphere as free as possible from points of contention."[155] Not only were the details of religion not published, but at least one group alleged at the time of partition that the director of Land Records refused them to the Indian Statistical Institute "on the ground that census records were not public documents."[156] Clearly, the crisis of imminent division curtailed the government interest in public distribution of census materials, thus countermanding earlier inclinations of the state to view the popular distribution of census results as a public good.

Overall, the 1941 census most tragically illustrated the conflicting tensions in the census. First, British idealizations of the role neutral enumeration would play in the state and populace contrasted with the political practicalities of emphasizing religious and caste stratifications in an emergent democratic society. Second, British interest in controlling the enumerative and classificatory apparatus conflicted with their reliance on two million Indians to perform most of the labor and the acquiescence of three hundred million to respond to their questions. Discussing the communal turmoil that struck some locales during the census—especially Lahore—Yeatts intoned, "The point to be borne in mind is that it is not the enumeration agency . . . [which] is the danger. It was not the enumerators who wrecked the Lahore census. It was the people themselves." With unwitting prophecy, Yeatts declared that if separate electorates persisted, "[l]ooking ahead one cannot envisage anything but extreme difficulty in the Punjab and Bengal ten years hence."[157] He had no way of knowing how correct he was, even as he overlooked the crucial role the census had in South Asian reimaginings of their societies.

## CONCLUSION

In each decade of the census, official correspondence and publications included reports of indigenous apprehensions and possible panic, usually followed by testimony to a general calm during the census's execution. These dual themes evidence both the awareness and mocking dismissal of Indian fears regarding the enumeration. Most census reports—both published and otherwise—included examples of the most extreme concerns, such as

a rumor circulating in Barabunki, during Oudh's trial census, that the census represented a British subterfuge for their effort to snatch two virgins from each village and send them to fan the queen in England.[158] The 1872 report on the Bengal census devoted an entire chapter to anecdotes reflecting such concerns.[159] In the next census, the collector of Shahabad reported a variety of rumors regarding the government's purported plans, mostly dealing with taxation, harm to women, or the abduction of children for employment as laborers or in the military. Some district residents believed the government used the count to collect Indians fated to serve as a blood sacrifice meant to protect a railroad bridge.[‡‡‡‡‡] However, like most officials throughout the history of the census, the collector concluded that few residents ever acted on these fears and they had little effect on the proceedings[160] (although during a few early censuses some residents had fled to their fields or to other regions at the enumerators' approach).[161] The persistent inclusion of such stories evidence a disconnect between British scientistic idealizations of the census and their own admitted use of its results.

The seeming sincerity of surprise—even derision—regarding the populace's fears hints at the degree to which some British officials convinced themselves of the scientific interests that drove the census even when the pragmatic intentions could not be more apparent, and certainly were to many Indians. For instance, the chief commissioner of the Central Provinces opined in 1867, "The Natives are very difficult thoroughly to understand, they are very liable to follow one another in unreasonable panic, and in all unenlightened countries a numbering of the people may possibly be associated with ideas of taxation or worse evils." Even as the Court of Directors prepared for the ill-fated 1861 census, it recognized that if the people of Bengal, who had experienced no previous census, were comforted "as the people in other Parts of India are satisfied that enquiries of this nature are not set of foot with reference to fiscal objects, the necessary information can be obtained."[162]

Yet how unreasonable were such suspicions when Britons often referred to the role of the census in determining taxes? As early as 1832, some enumerations had tax adjustments as a primary goal.[163] Indeed, the 1871–1872 census led to a significant reevaluation of taxation calculations within Shahabad district.[164] In the larger picture, fears that gathering information on the population would be used not only for taxation but also labor and military recruitment were only logical,[165] especially in Bihar, which served both markets so exceptionally. Hence, although well founded, Indian fears spurred British derision because they served to demonstrate indigenous ignorance of the scientific properties that Britons viewed as legitimizing them—properties that reflected British epistemic superiority. The ideals of scientism convinced not only countless Indians of the utility of

‡‡‡‡‡ Of note, George A. Grierson reports a similar anxiety regarding his photography. While preparing to execute an image, "the grandmother of the family refused to allow any of the children to appear in the picture, her reason being that the Government was building the bridge across the Gandak and wanted children to bury under the foundations." Grierson 1885, 4.

British knowledge projects, but also legitimated (if not valorized) them in the minds of the Indians and Britons who managed them. Both sentiments informed the comments of Baboo Mahendra Nath Bose, deputy collector of Rajshahi: "I explained the object of the census in all its scientific bearings. The villagers were satisfied, and exclaimed, 'What wonders the British Government has achieved! The Great Akbar never attempted such a thing.'"[166] In another instance of cooperation, British author R. Montgomery Martin applauded Dwarakanaut Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore's grandfather, who helped corroborate population figures for the author's *Statistics of the Colonies of the British Empire* (1839).[167] However, even at the terminus of empire, many Indians demonstrated resistance to the increasingly hegemonic information order. Sub-Divisional Officer Gordon M. Ray noted in 1940 that Chainpur area villagers did a good job in the complicated business of census preparation, but some had to be threatened into participation.[168]

Despite some continuities of identity categories and information-gathering strategies from what existed in pre-British India, the overall matrix of interrelated epistemologies that provided both the *context* of knowing and the *categories* that shaped the content of knowing represent a major departure from previous traditions in South Asia. That is, when considering how the British government primarily defined Indians using religious boundaries, at least as important as the specific classifications that the British deployed was the model of classification they developed and its derivation from the natural sciences. Moreover, this model provided a shared paradigm for managing the various data collected and analyzed by the variety of epistemologies. This helped make the resulting information intelligible across disciplines and promoted the resulting matrix of interrelated epistemologies in which each discipline mutually reinforced the others' conclusions, while relying on a classificatory paradigm that prescribed mutually exclusive categories distinguished by definitively drawn boundaries.

It is testament enough to the importance of the census that the government underwrote its enormous costs in 1941 despite considerable obstacles: the lack of Indian Civil Service officers, the costs of the war, and political pressure on officers from parties with sharply divergent goals. As we have seen, these pressures mounted as Indian civilians sought to co-opt the census for their own ends. Indeed, an article in the *Statesman* argued "the report is meant primarily for use in India and by the Indian public."[169] Various nationalist groups, appropriating the notion of representation via groups, used the census data in their creation of what Appadurai aptly terms "self-consciously enumerated communities" that particularly valued majority status.[170] The fears that attended being surveyed for the census became complemented (if not replaced) by fears of *not* being included in the census, especially in terms of religion and caste. During the 1930s and 1940s, members of the legislative assembly often questioned if not challenged census officials during public business about census instructions, operations, and classifications. The power of the British census—and broader matrix of knowledge—was evidenced by the desire, and often the demand, by Indians to be included in categories previously perpetuated by

Britons such as tribal. A member of the Muslim League said it succinctly when he described "British Democracy" as "based on counting of heads."[171]

Until 1941, the census drew on coalescing and existent disciplines in its narrative reports. Despite the effort to craft these sections, the numbers likely appeared the most penetrable for most readers. And because most of these used religion as the primary category of analysis, the conclusion about Indians' endemic (and mutually exclusive) religiosity was enforced and reinforced. For instance, preceding his 1891 census report for Shahabad district, collector F. H. B. Skrine provides a historical, narrative introduction to the area. After describing the political and immigration history of Aryans, Muslims, aboriginal tribes, and various castes, he concludes with a description of one village: "In Chainpur, in the Bhabhua subdivision, a number of Rajputs and other Hindu castes became Muhammadans. Some were converts by force, and others found substantial advantages in voluntarily embracing Islam. Several villages in Chainpur contain such Muhammadans. They still practice many Hindu customs, such as plastering the floor before cooking and bathing before meals." This verbal description contrasted starkly with the numerical description that followed. Dedicated to its process of combining data from individuals into larger aggregates on the village, district, division, province, and all-India levels, the census of India combined the numbers from Chainpur's residents with those of a progressively larger number of villages, towns, and cities. The population of its *thana*'s 155,747 Hindus, 15,215 Muslims, and three Christians would be represented in the columns of Skrine's report[172] and subsumed into the larger population in the columns of all-India statistics. Chainpur's numbers—locked into the line-divided, mutually exclusive columns of these tables—still counted long after the collector's narrative of Hindu-Muslim consanguinity had disappeared into bureaucratic files and had been eclipsed by communalist expectations. As we shall see in the next chapter, however, other disciplines slowly developed that would better allow for categorical overlaps and permeability.

As the story of Harshu illustrates one of the curious customs peculiar to India, I will give it just as I heard it at Chayanpur.

Raja Sâlivâhan of Chayanpur having married a second wife (a Bhâgelni of the Rewa family), his first wife suspected that her husband had been influenced by his purohit, and determined to ruin him. It so happened that Harshu at this time began to exhibit a light raised on a pile on the top of his house at Jamüa, which could be seen at Chayanpur. The elder Râni insinuated to the Raja that this exhibition was part of an ambitious project to oust him from his kingdom, and the credulous man was so worked upon by his wife that he at last resumed possession of the thirty-three villages held by his purohit. On this the enraged Brahman at once sat down in *dharna* before the Raja's palace, determined to starve himself for a month, unless his *Jâgir* was restored. His *dharna* is said to have begun on [the date of] 4th *Mâgh Badi*, in Samvat 1484, or A.D. 1427, and his death to have followed 21 days afterwards on the 15th *Mâgh Sudi*. As the period which he had prescribed to himself had not been completed, his guru proceeded to Chayanpur and called up the ghost or spirit of Harshu to finish the 31 days required. Ever since then his ghost has been worshipped by the people of Chayanpur, and *Hom* [fire sacrifice] is offered daily by the ministering Brahman for the benefit of all classes.

The story of Harshu is continued after his death, as the people all assert that his ghost, burning for revenge, proceeded to Delhi, and prevailed on the king to send a Muhammadan army to expel the Raja from Chayapur. The Raja resisted and was killed, and the whole of his family were exterminated with the single exception of one female.

—ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM, *Report of Tour in the Central Provinces and Lower Gangetic Doab in 1881–82* (1884), 160–161.

# 6

# A Raja, a Ghost, and a Tribe

## STUDIES IN FOLKLORE, ETHNOLOGY, AND RELIGION

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IT IS PERHAPS surprising to find a ghost story in a government report. That Alexander Cunningham (d. 1893), founder and director of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), would give such detail to a village narrative and include it in one of his tour reports does not seem to square with the heavily empirical and historiographic thrust of archaeology as

he practiced and promoted it. However, Cunningham's attention to Chainpur's oral traditions and the rani's genealogy reflects the importance of folklore and ethnology in nineteenth-century representations of Chainpur, its surrounding villages, and their population. These dual interests would both combine, later in the century, into the discipline of anthropology and serve as two important roots for the coalescing discipline of the empirical study of religion.

Folklore and ethnology each emerged from the same quandary that served as the motivation for so many disciplines: how to organize what appeared as a kaleidoscope of phenomena in such a way as to make sense of them? Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer William Crooke perhaps put it best when he declared, "my difficulty has arisen not so much from deficiency of material, as in the selection and arrangement of the mass of information, which lies scattered through a considerable literature, much of which is fugitive."[1] Crooke's conundrum was shared by all who sought to make general claims about hundreds of million of Indians, or even just the few million in Shahabad district. The mode of organization that each inevitably chose reflected innately a strategy of comparison. Christocentric travelogues compared Chainpur theologically and ethnographically, measuring the distance of its denizens' beliefs from the true faith according to the experiences of Christian travellers. The gazetteers compared the village encyclopedically, differentiating it from other locales—against which it was arrayed in alphabetical order—by listing its most prominent features. The census compared Chainpur statistically, contrasting enumerations of its populations with those of other places according to specific categories. Beyond these modes of comparison, considered in earlier chapters, Crooke and other observers pursued morphological and evolutionary comparison through two new ways of knowing Chainpur: folklore and ethnology. Motivated in this period by different impulses and directed toward different evidence, these two disciplines nevertheless shared not only certain scientistic ideals, but also an urge to establish metanarratives that could trace change across time. This motivated a reliance on evolutionary narratives as the basis of their comparative framework, as well as the use of genealogical and morphological forms of comparison.

Many Europeans predicated their interest in folklore and ethnology on the perception of changes—both at home and abroad—which they framed within a hierarchical, evolutionary scale of comparison. Folklore specialists and hobbyists often saw certain popular beliefs and stories as a window onto a present soon to be past, if not on cultures already lost. Ethnologists tended to see physiological change along a similar arc of transformation. In both instances, perceptions of decline relied upon a notion of progress, creating a metanarrative of civilizational and/or biological change and success in which each cultural component or physical example could be posited teleologically. Some of those in the present whose situation seemed incongruent with the current teleological apex were seen to represent a survival of things and peoples past. By pegging these differing conditions to a teleological narrative of civilizational and/or biological

improvement, proponents established a narrative tool for the performance of evolutionary comparison.

Although one cannot think of evolutionary theory without thinking of Charles Darwin (d. 1882), Darwin was disinclined to associate the dynamic of natural selection that stood at the heart of his evolutionary theory with sociocultural change, let alone teleological valuation. When Darwin observed the differences in striping among zebras of Africa, the Kattywar from northwest India, and other horse breeds, he did not structure his comparison relative to a ranking of better or worse species. While he relied on a narrative to explain the changes as due to the descent, over thousands of generations, of an entirely striped ancestor that gave rise to the many varieties of horse apparent today,[2] he did not depict zebras as truer or purer than the less prominently striped Kattywar. The introduction of hierarchy into evolutionary comparison belongs to those promoting teleologies of either development or decline who transformed Darwin's theory of natural selection (in which species variation reflects the best forms for surviving in a *specific* environment) into theories purporting variation to reflect *universal* superiorities or inferiorities. Hence, instead of seeing the evolution of *Homo sapiens* as a development best suiting the genus in particular locations, some viewed the new species as the crown of the tree of life. Perhaps as another expression of Christian theology refashioned with scientistic concepts, this less reflects Darwin's views than it parallels biblical-literalist themes of humanity as the crown of creation in which Adam alone is formed in God's image and is animated by God's breath. The history of European and Indian deliberations on both Chainpur's Harsu Brahm narrative and its tribal population reflects the epistemic changes wrought by the emergence of folklore studies and ethnology.

## ANTIQUITIES, FOLKLORE, AND MORPHOLOGICAL COMPARISON

Folklore studies emerged in Europe as elites sought to account for the diversity they encountered domestically. Urban elites experienced, many for the first time, country customs and stories as rural upheavals and rapid industrialization brought thousands into cities. In parallel with antiquarians, some, who had the leisure time to do so, set about to collect and "preserve" what they could, especially narratives that came to be called folklore. However, paralleling what had occurred in amateur practices of geology, geography, botany, and zoology before disciplines had coalesced, some enthusiasts sought to move beyond mere collection and toward systematized analysis and regularized classification. In time, they endeavored to establish a universal system of genealogical and/or morphological comparison anchored in metanarratives of change. Empire provided the context for the development of global metanarratives and comparative categories, which were proposed and debated in a crystallizing transnational community of specialists. Chainpur's perhaps most enduring narrative cycle eventually caught their attention.

The seven known outsiders who recorded an account of Chainpur's unjust raja and his vengeful vizier took various approaches toward interpreting the narrative and assessing its importance. But collectively, they reflected the coalescence of folklore studies of India. Between 1810 and 1915, interest in vernacular narratives accelerated, demonstrating a clear break from the Sanskrit and Persian focused orientalist tradition. So, for instance, Horace Hayman Wilson sought as early as 1825 to complement his study of Sanskrit texts through interviews with Bengalis in order to address lacunae he perceived in ancient works.[3] Propelled by both Romantic and scientistic impulses, folklorists often viewed themselves as simultaneously preservers of disappearing traditions and revealers of past mysteries. Significantly, nearly half of our seven authors were Indian. Qualified by their native knowledge of vernacular languages, advantaged by their easier access to female sources, and motivated by intellectual, nationalist, or religious sensibilities, indigenous collectors helped develop folklore studies in the subcontinent almost since its introduction there.

### *Collecting antiquities*

Francis Buchanan provided the first known published version of the raja-*brahm* narrative,[4] having his assistant Ramajai Batacharji record it. Buchanan undoubtedly was motivated by one of the lengthy, eight-point instructions issued by the East India Company (EIC) to guide his survey. Perhaps the company's directive regarding religion drove his interest, instructing him to record "the number, progress, and most remarkable customs of each different sect or tribe of which the population consists; together with the emoluments and power which their priests and chiefs enjoy; and what circumstances exist or may probably arise that might attach them to Government, or render them disaffected." EIC concerns clearly saw religion as a probable source of political power and a possible topic of social discontent, a view that informed the directors' initial unwillingness to admit Christian missionaries. But another directive equally may have applied, as it ordered Buchanan to record "whatever you may discover worthy of remark concerning the *history and antiquities* of the country."[5]

For the directors and Buchanan, the term "antiquities" had somewhat broader meaning than today's usage. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Europeans had used the word to connote not only physical objects from the past but also genealogical connections and oral traditions. Hence, originally, country gentlemen examined the narratives and customs of the present—especially of their lands' laborers—for traces of the past, while some urban elites collected traditions seemingly threatened with extinction among the displaced workers arriving in cities from rural regions. At first anyway, English attitudes tended to run that such survivals should be eliminated because the past they recapitulated included Catholic and pagan traditions that defied the reigning Protestant supremacy. But later, as Romanticism reacted against an expanding rationalism and, then, invasive industrialism, many antiquarians embraced folk culture in a nostalgic grasp of

disappearing modes of better living. Some idyllically viewed pleasant villages refreshed by airy breezes with hardy peasants upholding wholesome traditions as a fading predecessor to crowded cities darkened by coal-fueled factories whose impoverished laborers fell into moral depravity. This favorable view of the past also made antiquarian exploration useful for conservative nationalist movements, and collections of Irish and German "folklore"—the English term coined in 1846—soon ensued. The stature of the Brothers Grimm in folklore research reflected the authority German studies held in the nascent field as Europeans struggled to define an appropriate methodology that could be used not only at home but also abroad in their expanding network of colonies and imperial domains.[6] Meanwhile, numerous literary figures in Ireland collected Gaelic folklore and interwove it into their plays and poems.[7]

Three important themes emerge from this history of the antiquarian and folklore movements. First, they were enlivened by a sense of inevitable and imminent disappearance as nonindustrial, nonrationalistic ways of life appeared doomed by the spread of "European civilization," both inside and outside of Europe (whether or not this decline was good depended on the observer). Second, evidence from these soon-to-be-extinct cultures could be and had to be collected in the interests of science. Physical items, as we shall see in the next chapter, could be then displayed in museums and exhibitions, while oral items could be reduced to writing, published, and distributed for analysis. Third, these material and verbal specimen could be fitted into modern narratives that connected the present with the past.

These narratives of connection that helped position various observed items relative to one another could be established genealogically or morphologically, or through a combination of both. Genealogies create a series of links that temporally unite different people, ideas, or objects in a chain of tradition. Hence, just as the early Company recognized that their political control required an understanding of indigenous religions, so it grasped that political power often flowed through families—families that established their genealogical legitimation through narratives. These fit within broader British conceptions of a singular (but not monolithic) India that projected a set of *civilizational* genealogies tending to view Hindu civilization as autochthonous to India and Muslim civilization as immigrant from Central and West Asia. The British government, therefore, considered a grasp of these political and civilizational genealogies crucial for discerning the subcontinent's social landscape. Later, when Indian nationalisms coalesced in the nineteenth century, South Asians would forge new political genealogies that—as appropriate for democratic ideals—connected all or most citizens to the grandeur of their nation's past. Through their act of labeling a custom or belief a "survival," antiquarians (whether European or Indian) categorized it according to civilizational norms for the past and today. They then fit the item into a progressive or degenerative national narrative, inherently comparing today positively, or not, against "then."

Antiquarians of a more morphological bent sought similarities among items from distant places, often drawing a connection through theories of diffusion or parallel development. The former argued for influential, intercultural flows of ideas, materials, and/or peoples. The latter might lead to conclusions about universal human qualities made manifest in disparate, unconnected developments. So, for instance, observations about the prevalence of beliefs in ghosts among Indian tribals, Chinese sailors, and Welsh farmers might be taken as evidence either of a historically shared common culture that generated these ideas or of an inherent human belief in such apparitions. In either case, observers often emplotted such phenomena in a metanarrative of civilizational development, thus historicizing them so they appeared as outmoded notions that could be expected to fade, for better or for worse, with exposure to modernity. For those with faith in European civilizational superiority, the new forms of education and knowledge emanating from Western epistemic centers—both in Europe and abroad—were expected to eclipse indigenous traditions even in the world's remote corners. For these progressivists, the urgency of preservation was fired by less of a concern for losing part of the present than for losing crucial evidence regarding the past.

Although the fret about disappearing cultures had yet to solidify by the time of his January 1813 visit to Chainpur, Buchanan's mission exhibited some of these dimensions of antiquarian interest. This helps make sense of what might appear to us as his haphazard combination of genealogy, historiography, political analysis, and religious studies in his account of the raja and *brahm*. Buchanan begins with consideration of local stories regarding two brothers—Munda and Chandu—and various ruins in the vicinity, including the Mundeswari temple painted two decades earlier by the Daniells. He then considers the claims of the self-styled "Rajas of Chayanpur," such as their descent from "Sarivahan Raja."* To anchor these claims in the present, Buchanan gives a description of Sarivahan's Chainpur fort that, at the time of his visit, stood intact with a ditch surrounding a stone rampart capped at each corner by bastions. The surveyor then explains the debate about whether Sarivahan was the last in his family to enjoy significant rule or not. Regardless, he reports that everyone agrees with a "monstrous legend" in which "Harshu Pangre," the *purohit* (sacrifier) of the last raja, destroyed his employer after he had died sitting *dharna* (protest through self-starvation) and became an angry ghost. Buchanan then offers a historical critique of these claims before describing the current claims of the "Rajas of Chayanpur" family to be descended from the doomed raja's daughter, who won respite from her family's destruction because she offered the soon-to-suicide Harshu a drink. He next discusses the claims of Sakawar Rajput descent by this family and the Sakawar past of the current "owner of Chayanpur," a now-Pathan family that purportedly

* In order to reflect the variety of spellings for the different characters in the narratives described, this chapter will refer to each name according to the form indicated in the example under consideration. In all other chapters, the names have been adapted to reflect usage common at independence, which is also common now.

converted to save their property under Muslim rule. Following a description of Brahmans who profit from burnt offerings in Harshu's name and a list of names for village deities, he ends the discussion with a description of the house associated with Harshu at a nearby village, also describing a nearby Hanuman temple before entering into a discussion of the Pathan ruins of Chainpur.[8]

Hence, Buchanan pursues an assessment of the "Rajas of Chayanpur's" claims through the narration and critique of their genealogical assertions. The physical relics of Chainpur's fort and the family's ruined castle in a neighboring village serve as touchstones for the narration that he clearly considered pertinent to the Company's interests in mapping local political power and revenue collectors. He frames the social contestations partly in terms of caste and *baradari*: the Sakawar Rajput rajas, the current Kanoj Brahman priest, and the present Pathan owners. But Buchanan's interest is less in local narratives than in what they can tell him about the past, which he parses using a frame of religious identity. Thus, he dismisses indigenous claims of the antiquity and factuality of the "altogether wild and monstrous" raja-*brahm* narrative by a simple litmus test: since a Muslim saint's tomb lays near the place where devotees venerate Harshu, the story must be "an invention of very modern date, that is since the Company's government has checked the Muhammedan power from injuring the Hindu worship." In other words, Hindu places of worship could never exist near Muslim sites "so long as the Muhammadan officers retained authority."[9] He posits that the Chainpur raja fell to Muslim forces two hundred and fifty years earlier. Buchanan also offers religious critique, as in his comments on the Brahmans' profits. Later, in his deliberations on two local Muslim tombs, he sardonically observes that the caretaker who is paid to care for a Pathan leader's mausoleum tends a saint's tomb instead "for a dead saint is often much better than a living one, and worth a hundred dead lords."[10] Overall, therefore, Buchanan's endeavors in antiquities analyze material ruins and local narratives through frames of caste/*baradari* and religion in an effort to establish a past usable for determining the political present. Relatively speaking, among all of his reports, Buchanan wrote a great deal more on topography and antiquities than any other single topic. In his Shahabad report, the next-most-reported topics were agriculture and people, followed by natural productions.[11]

In comparison, the missionary William Bowley evidenced a decidedly non-antiquarian interest in Chainpur when he visited twenty-nine years later to preach. The contrast is instructive. According to this native Christian's rendition of Harsu's narrative[12] (given in full in chapter 3), the story offers no helpful insight into the past because it fails the only meaningful test of truth: relative to Christian theology as Bowley understands it. James Long, whose biography of Bowley provides the only extant edition of that missionary's Chainpur visit, approves his fellow minister's confrontational and condemnatory approach, which once included writing a tract that "exposes Mohammed's pretenses."[13] In such views—congruent with radical displacement perspectives—indigenous narratives are to be overwritten, not preserved.

### *The turn towards morphological comparison*

Chandrasekhara Banurji, deputy magistrate for Bongong district in lower Bengal, demonstrated an alternative perspective in 1877, when he described the Kaimur Range that stretches along Chainpur's southern flank for the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. His article narrates Harsu's story through an antiquarian paradigm, even as it resists its reframing within an historiographical metanarrative. Apparently visiting Chainpur as part of an overall survey of Shahabad's plateau, Banurji follows antiquarian patterns by describing first the ruins of the area, conjecturing their history, and then noting the presence of the *brahm*'s place of worship. In the shadow of the decayed magnificence of "Ikhtiyar Khan's" mausoleum and the crumbling walls of the ancient fort, the devotion to Harsha "has survived the storms of ages." Drawing on a contemporary Hindi poem entitled *Brahma-Muktavali*, Banurji demonstrates that the Brahman's history is "enveloped in a myth."

> Harsha Brahma is said to have been the high priest of Raja Salibahan, a Rajput chief of the country. Falling out with the Raja, the Brahman was deprived of his lands, and he waged a little war in which he invited the Emperor of Delhi to assist him. Whether the curse of the Brahman or the valour of the Pathan was the cause, we will not undertake to determine, but the Raja's power was exterminated and Harsha Brahma rose triumphant. Dying soon after, he was sanctified, and his shrine stands on a raised terrace with no other shelter but the branches of an old pipal tree, and continues to draw crowds of daily pilgrims from distant places.[14]

Banurji reiterates antiquarian themes: ruins of a past civilization, samples of customary practice and narrative, and insight into the past provided by the same. Yet he resists historiographical judgment on whether or not Harsha's curse caused the raja's demise. While Banurji does not hesitate to situate Chainpur as a battleground in a long history of racial conflict (as we shall examine later), he does not harness the *brahm*-raja narrative to pull some larger political story. Such narrative suspension of disbelief would be an important contribution of anthropological thought to the empirical study of religion, since it opened the possibility of dispassionately comparing narratives, no matter their source or the analyst's cultural heritage. So, for instance, in a different context Banurji reiterates Jones's comment regarding the parallel between the infanticidal myths of Raja Kansa and Herod.[15]

### *The rise of folklore*

Significantly enough, Buchanan, Bowley, and Banurji were among the only four authors to publish a version of the raja-*brahm* narrative cycle between 1813 and 1883.[†] Yet, in half

[†] The three authors who penned the Shahabad volume of W. W. Hunter's gazetteer, *A Statistical Account of Bengal* (1877), provided a short version of the raja-*brahm* narrative that drew entirely from Buchanan, whom they acknowledged, just as Long relied upon Bowley.

that time in the following decades, seven other authors published a version of the narrative. In other words, as far as records indicate, Chainpur's raja-*brahm* story appeared nearly twice as often in print during the thirty-three years following 1884 than in the previous seventy. This surge coincided with the ascendency of the folklore movement and the coalescence of both anthropology and the empirical study of religion, as well as the "information scare"[16] accompanying the 1857–1858 rebellion and the increasing participation of Indians in folklore studies both within and outside the government.

Cunningham's narration, with which this chapter began, reflects the deepened import of folklore studies in the post-rebellion period. The initial 1861 directive by the governor general, Lord Canning, for a north Indian archaeological survey,[‡] declared the survey's aim to preserve "the history of [inscriptions and remains] so far as it may be traceable, and a record of the traditions that are preserved regarding them."[17] As he shaped the nascent ASI, Cunningham took these traditions into account in two ways. First, he declared that among the most important qualifications surveyors needed was "the faculty of discriminating what is valuable in the traditions of the people," clearly indicating the importance of these materials for understanding current conditions. Second, Cunningham viewed oral traditions as essential for understanding the historical cultures responsible for building particular edifices or mentioned in specific inscriptions. Thus, in addition to skills in ancient languages required to read inscriptions, the officers also needed vernacular languages so as to record these traditions as part of their overall report on each site. Ultimately, recording these narratives figured centrally into the methodology the ASI director fashioned,[18] as he sought to preserve narratives regarding sites as testaments regarding both the historical builders and the current inhabitants. Meanwhile, a sense of urgency regarding disappearances also motivated Cunningham, though it differed from that of other folklore collectors: not only were ancient monuments threatened by natural deterioration, but government engineers were tearing down temples for railway ballast.[19]

The urge for insight into builders' cultures appears to explain Cunningham's narration of the story of Raja Salivahan and the ghost of Harshu at the end of one of his tour accounts. He views the narrative as evidence of a current practice that provides insight into the history of a particular "aboriginal race" mentioned in a set of inscriptions. The archaeologist sees a connection because the mantras used in Harsu's temple—and in other temples dedicated to the deified dead—are called "*Sâbari mantra,* or 'Savara spells.'" Based on the apparent universality of such worship throughout the subcontinent, Cunningham concludes that it represents "an aboriginal cult, which has been generally adopted by all the lower classes." Thus, after years of collecting narratives during his archaeological tours from one end of India to another about people worshipped postmortem, Cunningham embeds his one-day encounter at Harsu Brahm's shrine into a lengthy, morphological comparison that he labels "Demon-Worship, or the propitiation of the deified ghost of persons who have died a violent death," the origin of which he linguistically traces to one (non-Aryan) tribe.[20]

‡ The words were inscribed on the title page of at least the first score Archaeological Survey of India reports.

Comparison with a later ASI report illustrates the significance of Cunningham's analytic move for the comparative study of religion. Cunningham's comparative method appears to merge the ethnographic and morphological types of comparison that Smith describes. It asserts his authority as a traveller-observer while masking his personal perspective behind the objectivity of scientific analysis.[21] He both insinuates to have collected firsthand his rendition of the Harshu narrative and includes its protagonist, together with other examples, in the category of "demons."[§] Theodor Bloch, on the other hand, offers a divergent narrative analysis as he reports on his visit to Chainpur in 1901 or 1902 while serving as archaeological surveyor for the Bengal circle. He explains "Inside the fort, there is a small Hindu shrine where a piece of stone is worshipped as Hamsu Brahma. I was told that it represents a holy man who, after death, had become a Brahma. I have nowhere else met with this curious form of worship."[22] In contrast with his superior, Bloch squeezes his description of the encounter between his depiction of Chainpur's fort and Friday mosque, two monuments of archaeological interest for him. As opposed to Cunningham's methodical comparison with similar stories of the venerated dead, Bloch admits his interest only derives from the uniqueness of Hamsu's veneration. While Cunningham's interest in discerning something important about the past leads him to compare Chainpur's *brahm* with similar forms of what he judges to be a familiar phenomena, it is the comparison of its bizarreness with the ordinary that compels Bloch's description of the worship of Hamsu. Despite the appearance of ethnographic similarity between Cunningham's and Bloch's narrations, the elder archaeologist's morphological comparison appears to lessen his narration's subjectivity relative to Bloch's travelogue-like dalliance with a curiosity. The difference, of course, became essential for the developing discipline of anthropology that, as we shall see, needed to professionally position itself as apart from both the on-the-spot but too subjective encounter of the amateur traveller and the at-a-remove but analytic gaze of the armchair ethnologist.

Although Jonathan Z. Smith is certainly correct that the ethnographic mode compares the unfamiliar of the exotic location with the familiar of the traveller's home, lengthy enough exposure to Indian cultures meant that some Britons gained broad enough and deep enough experiences to not simply react to difference with Britain, as less experienced travellers commonly did. Hence, Cunningham devises a category of worship entitled "Demon-Worship" to create an intellectual space for comparison. Because his use of the term "demon" seemingly borrows not from the sense of malevolent spirit used by many Christians but from the ancient notion of a superhuman agent acting between the realm of humans and deities, as found in Greek myths, Cunningham offers a point of connection between a form of contemporary Indian practice and ancient European belief. What appears entirely alien to Bloch seems quite familiar to Cunningham, both from his contemporary Indian experiences and from classic Greek literature. Orientalists

[§] Cunningham attributed to Francis Buchanan the first recognition that "demon-worship" was specific to "aborigines." Cunningham 1884, 139.

had long made such connections, sometimes with a disparagement that the Indian present had parallels only with the European past, and sometimes drawing the derision of men like James Mill who saw orientalists as too generous to Indian cultures. However, categories such as Cunningham's opened the way for comparisons that challenged just how "other" Indians were, as we shall see when considering folklore and comparative religious studies.

In any case, Cunningham takes a less judgmental approach than Buchanan or Bowley, in accord with the newly forged approach of folklore studies. This is apparent as he continues his exploration of the Harshu narrative after narrating the raja's demise. Cunningham informs his readers about the survival of one of the raja's daughters, her son's reclaiming of the throne despite its temporary occupation by "one of the aboriginal *Cheru* chiefs," his own assessment of the presumed era of these events, and the status of Harshu's descendants. He concludes with a long paragraph describing the current popularity of Harshu throughout north India. Despite his critical perspective on local claims to the dating of the events, Cunningham demurs from declaring the narrative's veracity. Hence, even as the ASI director helps consolidate archaeology as a scientific discipline on the subcontinent, his treatment of at least one set of narratives regarding the past evinces the influence of a less positivistic approach, one that later would figure prominently in the formation of anthropology. Furthermore, his mention of the Chero tribals in the raja-*brahm* narrative reflects his attention to ethnology, that other historical prong of anthropology, which we will consider later in the chapter.

The practiced neutrality of Cunningham found expression in most accounts of the raja-*brahm* narrative published by subsequent observers. Responding to requests by the editor of *North Indian Notes and Queries* (*NINQ*, f. 1990) for anecdotes on folklore and religion, one Khairat Ali sent this version published in 1892.

> Harshu Paure—A deified Ghost.—In Chayanpur Babua, in the Arrah District, there is a platform in honour of Harshu Brahm. There was once a king Sáhbaran there. He built a great palace. Harshu Páure was his family priest. He had four sons. They built a house higher than the Rája's palace. One day the Rája and Ráni were asleep on the roof of the palace, and they saw a light high up on Harshu's house. The Rája told the Ráni that this was the house of their family priest. Next day the Ráni got her courtiers to hint to the Rája that the family priest by building his house as high as that of the Rája showed his intention of contending with his master. So the Rája was angry and sent workmen, who knocked down Harshu's house. He was so grieved that he sat *dharna* at the palace door for twenty-two days without food or drink. No one could induce him to go away. Finally the king's daughter implored him to drink, and Harshu drank a little water from her hand. Sugar had been mixed in the water. When he drank this, Harshu said—"You said you would give me only water. Why did you give me *sherbet?"* She said she gave it to him only to relieve his thirst. He blessed her, and told her that her progeny would increase and the Rája

> would be destroyed. Then Harshu died. When they went to take his corpse to Benares they saw him standing there with his wooden sandals on. He said he had become a Brahm, and whoever worshipped him would get his desires fulfilled. Now his altar is worshipped with fire sacrifice, Bráhmanical cords and sweets. If any one obtains his wish he offers a Bráhmanical cord and a silken waist string, and feeds Bráhmans in his name.[23]

Unfortunately, *NINQ* includes no details about Khairat Ali except his name and his hometown, Chunar: the garrison town that once housed William Bowley's mission station. However, we can discern that Ali does not contribute this story as a means for discerning a political genealogy or understanding tribal customs like his predecessors. He includes no mention of the fate regarding the kind daughter of the raja whom Buchanan describes—and Hunter repeats—as the founder of the Bhagwanpur rajas' lineage. Unlike Cunningham, Ali makes no connections to Chero tribals. Instead, like Cunningham, Ali appears to be motivated primarily by an interest in rural customs and its associated folklore, as his descriptions of ritual that frame the narrative appear to testify.

At the time of Ali's submission, *NINQ* was beginning to change the approach taken in its previous volumes (which published mostly materials from government reports) by including more notes from indigenous reporters. In subsequent volumes, British voices would be in the minority. Moreover, *NINQ* narrowed its range of regular topics to only anthropology, folklore, Anglo-India, and popular religion.[24] Most of this resulted from the editorship of William Crooke (d. 1923) who did more than anyone to advocate for and enable the systematic collection of Indian folklore during the Raj. As literary scholar Sadhana Naithani has demonstrated, Crooke represented a sharp break from most of his predecessors among scholarly Britons interested in Indian narratives and religion. Instead of focusing on Sanskrit, Persian, and vernacular literatures, or Brahmanically controlled materials and scholarly Islamic traditions as earlier generations of Britons had, he preferred investigating local oral literatures and everyday religious traditions. Crooke decried the lack of government attention to anything but "sacred books" and its ignorance of the "every-day faith of the immense rural population."[25]**

Crooke's commitment to rectifying this situation stretched into publishing projects far beyond his journal editing work. His *Materials for a Rural and Agricultural Glossary of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (1879) included a section on "ceremonies of rural life." In 1894, he published *An Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, a volume that sold out within months of its maiden publication. A second edition was issued two years later when his four-volume *Tribes and Castes of the North West Provinces* also appeared. However, by 1891 Crooke found frustration in his own limits. Although he used his government position to order village schoolteachers to

** Given the popularity of Celtic folklore in this period, perhaps Crooke's interests stemmed in part from his education in Dublin's Trinity College.

collect and report folktales, he felt dissatisfied with the amount of material this accrued, while also finding that his restricted knowledge of vernaculars and the obstacles his official status presented hampered systematic collecting. Thus he turned to Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube (d. 1914),[26] a native of Gorakhpur district north of Benares. From 1893 onward, *NINQ* bore the imprint of this graduate of Presidency College, Calcutta.[27]

While it is easy to conclude, as some historians do, that Europeans limited indigenous authors to collecting data for particular knowledge projects, while delegating to themselves the tasks of classifying and arranging that material for dissemination,[28] closer examination of some indigenous-foreigner collaborations suggests a more complicated situation. True, although the *NINQ* rendition of the raja-*brahm* narrative is in Khairat Ali's voice, it is presented by Crooke. Moreover, Crooke made scant mention of Chaube's vast contributions and provided him no obituary in *NINQ*.[29] Indeed, as Naithani writes, Chaube "does not exist in the catalog of any library or archives, neither in the United Kingdom nor in India."[30] However, his lack of visibility in the imperial archive should not be mistaken for a lack of influence. Many volumes of the journal featured Indian voices translated, interpreted, and categorized by Chaube as he worked for Crooke. Moreover, he offered an analysis based on his familiarity with foreign scholarship, such as when he compared Indian and English folklore based on recent scholarship.[31] Moreover, after Crooke's retirement, Chaube made his erstwhile employer *his* informant. As Chaube worked to publish biographies of British civil servants, he requested information from Crooke, resettled in the British Isles, even as Crooke continued to ask him for folk materials from India. The example of Chaube and Crooke—two men educated in British-established universities situated outside England[32]—reflects the increasingly complex exchanges between Indians and Britons that, throughout, were enmeshed in the imbalances of power.

Meanwhile, Crooke also pursued genealogical interests as he analyzed the narratives his indigenous collaborators provided. In the preface to his *Popular Religion*, he proposed three purposes for reading the collected materials. Crooke hoped, first, to help officers in rural areas "understand the mysterious inner life of the races among whom their lot is cast"; second, to spur more investigation—especially among educated Indians—into rural life; and third, to provide data for European scholars' theories. Crooke added that popular materials provided additional insight beyond classic texts into Hinduism's origins, which he believed derived from "a stratum" of people referred to as non-Aryan or Dravidian.[33] Even as it communicated this genealogical impulse, Crooke's use of the term "stratum" reiterated a common metaphor among Europeans that compared research in folklore and popular religion with work in geology and archaeology. Instead of sifting through layers of earth and rock to uncover the truth about the past, folklorists dug through obfuscating current manifestations or scattered survivals of long-obscured roots. Hence, pioneer Jacob Grimm viewed folklore collections as providing only "sundry bones and joints, as it were, of our old mythology."[34] Similarly, George Laurence Gomme, in his influential attempt to establish a "science of folklore," deliberately used geological terms in order to prompt folklorists to view cultural survivals as evidence from a racialized

past,[35] at the same time as the first generation of physical anthropologists unearthed buried human remains in an effort to chart humanity's racial history.

Crucial for our concern with narrative is the recognition among these authors that burial underground did not connote simply the survival and potential discovery of past objects or geologic strata but, rather, evidence of an *ordering* of the past. To wit, Charles Lyell—whose *Principles of Geology* helped cement this paradigm in the mind of Darwin and other Europeans—explained how sections of earth laid bare on sea cliffs or through mining operations "remain proofs of the order that once reigned."[36] Each cultural survival, like each geologic layer, became meaningful through an ordering "revealed" by two operations. First, a classification allowed each relic and strata to be identified as a particular type. Once so identified, each could then be situated relative to those surrounding it through a narrative that established it within an order of cultural and geologic change. If a geologist knows that in a particular region, sandstone overlays pumice, then once he has identified these strata at a specific site, he can conclude that an ancient sea or river deposited the sand atop even older rock resulting from volcanic eruption. Hence, classification, narrative, and order mutually relied upon one another. Of course, what fascinated ethnologists and Romantics alike were less the physically buried remains of the past (on archaeological interests, see the next chapter) than the living survivals of supposedly anachronistic cultural phenomena. Instead of focusing on inert, fossilized evidence, they embraced Romantic conceptions of contemporary traditions enlivening peasants.[37] Since these could not be dated and identified relative to their depth in the ground, their place in the human order depended heavily on second-order narratives of cultural change.

In Crooke's synthesis of Buchanan, Cunningham, and Ali's narratives of the raja-*brahm* conflict, we see a blending of these Romantic and scientistic impulses. Crooke appends to both his own narration in *Popular Religion* and to Ali's entry in *NINQ* a reassertion of Cunningham's observation that Harshu's veneration is spreading rapidly throughout north India. Moreover, in *Popular Religion* he provides a paragraph both to describe the appropriate offerings devotees made should the *brahm* successfully act on their behalf and to explain the exorcisms Harshu performs to expel primarily low-caste "spirits." However Crooke's classification of the raja-*brahm* narrative reveals his larger interest in Chainpur's current religious world. Just as Cunningham positioned his rendition of the story as an example of "demon-worship" and a survival from a non-Aryan past, so Crooke classifies it as an example of the deification of a noted person, which, in turn, is one subclass among many of devotion to "godlings."†† In his introduction to the subclass, Crooke expresses his near confidence in his ability for universal classification: "All or nearly all the deified saints of Northern India may be grouped under one or other

†† Crooke uses "godling" much as Cunningham used "demon": as a designation for deities less than a god but more than human. Crooke considers his usage on par with the modern vernacular meaning of the Sanskrit-derived *devata*, hence he is attempting to reconcile his terminology with indigenous concepts. Crooke 1978 (1896), 1:3–4.

of these categories."[38] Just as Cunningham created a pan-Indian category to encompass what Bloch viewed as unique, so Crooke creates a universal category that allows cross-cultural comparative associations of a phenomena that Cunningham described as "one of the curious customs peculiar to India."[39]

In all of this, Crooke establishes a progressive narrative of religion that arcs from the primitive to the modern; a trajectory he simultaneously universalizes with examples from Europeans and Indians, as well as Aryans and non-Aryans. The first pages of his *Popular Religion* establish a teleology in which survivals of older religions undermine the spread of preferred, higher beliefs. If Hinduism's original form has been diminished by "demonolatry, fetishism and kindred forms of primitive religion," then it differs neither from the corruption of imperial Roman religion through incorporation of local cults nor from the prevalence of heathenism among the Catholics of Tuscany. Similarly, in his introduction to the chapter on the worship of the sainted dead, Crooke explains how belief in a deceased ancestor (like Harshu) or leader who protects the family or tribe "is in fact the earliest attempt of the savage to realize the problems of human existence." Drawing parallels to ancient theologies, he characterizes the Vedas and ancient Greek thought as "primitive physics" in contrast with ancestor worship, which is both "primitive biology" and "a stage in the growth of anthropomorphism." Significantly, however, Crooke warns against earlier conclusions that such ideas exist only in Aryan thought, pointing to similar views among previously isolated, non-Aryan Indian tribes.[40]

Quite evidently, Crooke uses a teleological frame, adopting the latest developmental classifications of anthropological religious studies in an effort to include all Indian belief and practice as not only rational (no matter how "primitive"), but positioned on a spectrum of continuity with various sciences. This effort relies on an accurate classification of phenomena so as to determine their place within the teleological order. He concludes *Popular Religion* by applying a quote from the leading British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor to survivals in northern India: "Far from its beliefs and practices being a rubbish heap of miscellaneous folly, they are consistent and logical in so high a degree as to begin as soon as even roughly classified to display the principles of their formation and development: and these principles prove to be essentially rational, though working in a mental condition of intense and inveterate ignorance."[41] In other words, proper classification yields insight into the origins and nature of contemporary ideas and customs about which Indians themselves have little sense; hence, the frequency of Crooke's use of anthropological classifications such as demonolatry, fetishism, totemism, and nature religion. Meanwhile, the author implies a hierarchy to this teleology. While some European authors used terms such as "savage" and "primitive" in a nonderogatory manner, Crooke does otherwise when he uses words such as "impure" for primitive religions and "danger" and "degradation" in relation to their influence on higher religions. Crooke appears to rue the diminishment of belief in "the great primal gods" of both ancient Rome and Vedic India and clearly abhors some developments such as "the foul mysteries

of the Tantras and Saktis." Indeed, demonstrating the tenacity of medieval Christian categories, even "heathen" recurs.[42]

We might suspect that such passages place Crooke among those Britons who viewed Christianity—especially Protestantism—as typifying the zenith of cultural development.[‡‡] However, it remains unclear whether or not Crooke's implicit valorization of higher religions intended to champion Christianity. Despite his mention of a compromised Tuscany Catholicism, Crooke was largely silent in regard to Christianity on the subcontinent, even declaring that *NINQ* would include no entries on that religion. This cannot be interpreted as a parochial effort to delineate "Indian religion" to the exclusion of those originating elsewhere, since he included notes describing Muslims and Jews, two groups commonly left out by such conceptions.[43] Crooke's encyclopedic reference work *Things Indian* (1906) repeated this preference, including entries for many religious groups (including Jews), but not Christians. Existing scholarship gives little insight into his motivation. We are reminded that discerning personal motivations from historic figures is not an advisable endeavor given how far more complicated individuals tend to be than the motivations commonly ascribed to them. Given the category-challenging commitments of British officials such as General "Hindoo" Stuart and George Abraham Grierson,[44] we should be circumspect about easy conclusions.

Meanwhile, in his endeavor to collect material for *NINQ*, Crooke sought to tap the officials whom he knew engaged local residents and recorded area traditions. From experience, Crooke knew that these men commonly recorded such information in their notebooks and settlement reports, which remained inaccessible to most.[45] One such source was a set of survey and settlement records made for Bihar entitled simply "village notes."[46] Assistant Settlement Officer (ASO) Chandra Kumar Mathur arrived in Chainpur in 1911 as part of an effort being carried out in each of Shahabad district's villages to check government records against the local situation. For each village, Mathur and his companions filled in the intricately organized, prescribed form with observations on the nature of the soil, water, crops, revenues, markets, tenant rights, village officials, and local weights and measures, "castes" (including Muslim groups),[§§] and prominent religious sites. Mathur's report on Chainpur explained,

> The village is said to have belonged to Raja Sali Bahan about 500 yrs ago. At that time the neighboring villages were tolas [associated neighborhoods] of this village…

‡‡ It should be remembered that others viewed all religions as representative of a lower stage of development relative to other forms of thought. Anthropologist and army officer Richard Carnac Temple explained: "The last and most complex development of the mental processes" is philosophy, while religion is philosophy affected by emotions. Temple 1914, 13–14.

§§ Mathur lists Brahmans first and Doms (traditionally associated with funereal work) last. However, the listings in between do not all accord with the order found most commonly in Brahmanic rankings of purity and pollution. For instance, Chamar appears above Kurmi.

> It contains a large population being inhabited by all sects + creeds… There are two good tanks + two temples here, besides the place consecrated to the worship of "Harsu Barmha"—the martyr. The "Harsu Barmha" is worshipped to a great extent by the people from near + far. The place is looked upon as one of pilgrimage in the vicinity. The annual fair is held on the 24th Magh in commemoration of the date of martyrdom of "Harsu." The said "Harsu Baramh" (formerly Harsu Panday) was Purohit of Raja Salbahan [*sic*]. He caused his death owing to ill-feeling between him + the Raja in 1484 (Samvat Era). I have given a full history of the occurrence in my Circle Note.[47]

As Crooke lamented regarding such records, Mathur's short narrative here and longer history elsewhere did not apparently find wider distribution, buried as they became in the bureaucratic record.*** Nevertheless, the ASO's note demonstrates the government's continued interest in Chainpur's religious communities, sites, practices, and narratives. It records not only the *pukka* (brick-built) temples and mosques in the village, but also the raja-*brahm* narrative and the practices at the *brahm* temple.

### *Indian sources, British authorities, and those in between*

Crooke undoubtedly understood how Mathur's subaltern status in the Raj hierarchy may have aided him in collecting this material. Despite their commitment to drawing out materials from Indians and rural-based officials, Crooke and other British men met with various forms of resistance that opened opportunities for British women and Indian men who usually had fewer occasions to contribute to the information matrix. As Crooke explained, "If the 'Sahib' comes into a village to inquire into the assessment of the income tax, for instance, or to fix the revenue on a piece of alluvial land thrown up by the river, the sight of his note-book puts a sudden check on conversation, and he will observe that any question he asks are met with coldness or distrust, or will suddenly find himself unable to make himself intelligible in the local dialect."[48] Crooke's manner of collecting while on tour—sitting by a fire and interviewing visitors to his camp—particularly militated against attracting women informants. While he used his official engagements with indigenous men to collect material, he understood Indian women to be "the main repositories" of "native ways and knowledge" and rued the lack of British women, whom he viewed as the natural collectors of this information. Hence, he valued the work of Flora Annie Steel,[49] one author among a set of British female collectors that included Mary Frere (who published the first Indian folktale collection in 1868), Maive Stokes (1879), Alice Elizabeth Dracott (1897 and 1906), and Georgina Kingscote (1890).

*** Indeed, although the volume containing Mathur's village note for Chainpur and each of its neighbors could be located in Shahabad's erstwhile district record room in Ara, no trace of his circle notes could be found.

While the materials they disseminated became data (and some of their works became inspirational) for male academic folklorists in Europe, these women tended to view themselves as collectors, not scientists, and some had men write introductions or commentary complementing their collections.[50] So, for instance, Frere's collection—based on the stories of her *ayah*, Anna Liberata de Souza—includes an introduction by Frere's father, Sir Bartle Frere, who announces "A few words seem necessary regarding the origin of these stories." These include the usual ethnological claims about the race from which he speculates the stories derive, its arrival as an early immigration wave to India, the need to record the narratives before they disappear, and the stories' similarity to Norse legends and Welsh superstitions.[51] In other words, a European man provides the metanarrative frame for the narratives published by a European woman who collected them from an Indian woman. Although not viewing herself as a scientist, Mary Frere viewed the narratives through scientistic, and Romantic, lenses. She uses her preface to a later edition as an opportunity to describe Max Müller's interest in her book, and expresses a perspective that reaffirms the connections between classification, narrative, and order: "These few legends, told by one old woman to her grandchildren, can only be considered as representatives of a class. "That world," to use her own words, "is gone"; and those who can tell us about it in this critical and unimaginative age are fast disappearing too, before the onward march of civilization; yet there must be in the country many a rich gold-mine unexplored. Will no one go to the diggings?"[52] Significantly, the only woman narrator to have a story recorded in *NINQ* was recorded by Chaube, an indigenous man.[53]

While growing numbers of officials collected rural narratives as part of their work, Indian men increasingly borrowed from and contributed to folklore studies. However, their independence from British authority developed only gradually. When Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri published *Indian Folk-Tales* in 1887, he explained how his folklore interest originated while listening as a child to narratives by elderly women. But he credits army officer Richard Carnac Temple for encouraging him to publish them during his work in the ASI. In a later edition, another European ICS officer provides an introduction, in a manner much like Bartle Frere's.[54]

This reliance on male British authority also appears in the work of Ram Gopal Singh Chowdhari, already mentioned in chapter 4, who also requests a British official to pen an introduction to his book. Moreover, he draws heavily from L. S. S. O'Malley's Shahabad gazetteer (1906) for material to fill his travelogue/gazetteer, as evidenced in his Chainpur entry.

> There is a fort surrounded by a moat. Inside the rampart there is a small Hindu shrine where Harshu Brahm is worshipped. He was a Kanaujiya Brahman and priest of Raja Salivahana of that place. His house having been demolished by the Raja at the instigation of the Rani who had a grudge against him, he committed suicide by sitting ***dharna*** at the door of the Raja in 1427 A. D. He became a ***Brahm*** and destroyed the Raja with his whole family except one daughter who was kind to him

> and through her the family continues upto this day. Thenceforth, his worship commenced and is rapidly spreading [*sic*].[55]

Chowdhari's reliance on Britons should not be mistaken, however, for a lack of agency. This Patna High Court pleader reformulates British representations to promote his own perspective. Hence, he deliberately reconstitutes O'Malley's words (which drew on Buchanan and Cunningham) to describe the raja-*brahm* narrative by shearing from it any reference to terms like folklore, myth, or legend: words the British author uses to qualify certain narratives. Chowdhari also trims specific elements—such as the polygyny of Raja Salivahana and Harshu's postmortem apparition in Benares—perhaps concerned they might impugn the characters of the narrative. The fact that neither Chowdhari nor Sastri claims to draw scientific conclusions from the narratives they published suggest that they reject, at least in part, the scientistic frame employed by some Indians and many Britons.

In contrast, although he did not comment on the raja-*brahm* narrative, Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy (d. 1942) deserves short consideration in order to demonstrate how, in contrast with Chowdhari and Sastri, he pursued folklore studies from within the emergent scientific paradigm. A researcher among Bihari tribals and a frequent contributor to *The Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Roy often reflected on the state of Indian folklore study and referred to as many Indian authors as European. While he reiterated the common arguments both about narratives representing a disappearing past and about the various stages of culture, Roy also deftly worked through diffusionist, survivalist, and functionalist theories, while critiquing them as well. Arguing for a proactive Aryan Hindu culture, he concluded that all folk customs did not represent survivals of cultures in arrested development. Rather, some "appear to have been originally devised by higher civilization to bring higher ideals of religion and morality and social relations home to the minds of the more backward classes of the population." With particular attention to specific female rituals and resisting narratives of decay, Roy argued that instead of these rituals being without meaning, they are "charged with a new and deeper meaning" through purposeful changes in the ceremonies. Therefore, while entirely conversant with the theories initially introduced by Europeans, Roy provided his own interpretations without relying upon European scholars or officials to authorize them.[56]

A variety of factors limit the conclusions we can draw about folklore studies. First, the paucity of surviving Hindi, Urdu or Bhojpuri publications with references to Chainpur make it difficult to conclusively prove the point, but extant works suggest that audiences read about Harsu Brahm and Raja Salivahan predominantly in works penned in English. Second, since none of the English publications named any of the Chainpur residents who served as sources for the stories regarding the wrong-doing raja and the vengeful *brahm*, we cannot know if any originated from women. Given the complications such nonlocal male collectors faced, it would appear unlikely. Despite these obstacles, the fact that authors published versions of this narrative cycle so many more times after the disciplinary advent of folklore, anthropology, and empirical religious studies allows us to appreciate

how these forms of knowledge prompted more interest among both Britons and Indians in what became termed "folk stories," while providing more neutral classificatory systems than available to those who preceded them. Those interested in the scientific pursuit of folklore studies understood this crystallizing discipline to require more than the methodical collection of the stories. The narratives had to be ordered according to both a classificatory system and one of a number of metanarratives based on specific models of civilization. In contrast, ethnological research on the Chainpur region increasingly depended upon a biological metanarrative and racial classification system. However, both sets of studies relied upon the increasing scientistic authority of evolutionary thinking.

## ETHNOLOGY: GENESIS, GENETICS, AND EVOLUTIONARY COMPARISON

Despite the appreciable difference in the material they took for data and the conclusions they often drew, ethnologists joined folklorists in endeavors to create evolutionary metanarratives. These provided a historical skeleton upon which teleologies could be fashioned, evolutionary trajectories could be projected, and hierarchical comparisons made. While folklore studies often used local narratives to establish theories about the ancient origins of seemingly nonrational beliefs and practices, much of post-Darwinian ethnology sought to distinguish between the purported races using measureable physiological differences. Although for most folklorists, their metanarratives described civilizational evolution and, for most ethnologists, theirs traced biological evolution, the two trajectories coincided in significant ways for many members of both camps (and some belonged to both). Indeed, a central motivation for Victorian anthropology in South Asia stemmed from the quandary "dark-skinned," yet "civilized," Indians represented to those who expected humanity to fit within a hierarchy—and a narrative—that correlated increasingly lighter complexions with increasingly advanced civilization.[57] The issue of "aborigine tribes" illustrates particularly well efforts to construct an ethnological metanarrative of racial distribution, linguistic variation, caste origination, and religious formation.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that trajectories of historical inevitability appear not only in racial and racist discourse, but in the discourse about this discourse as well. An American in the twenty-first century cannot approach the issue of race without having images of enslaved African Americans and interned Japanese Americans—perhaps even genocidal Nazi camps—immediately cloud her mind's eye. They remind her of racial views based on presumably essential physiological difference and associated with the science of genetics. This makes investigating historical perspectives on race in India an inherently unsettling endeavor, as nineteenth-century pronouncements about racial difference appear inevitably to lead toward mid-twentieth-century urban ghettos and relocation centers, if not Auschwitz. However, when early Victorians referred to Indian races, they had neither Darwin nor Mendel in mind, but were more likely

thinking about Genesis.[†††] Over time, race provided an increasingly prominent comparative frame, a frame that would ultimately be married to non-religious notions—and narratives—of evolution. The conflation of race with genetics in South Asia was not fated, but reflected intellectual choices both among Europeans and Indians in which scientism figured heavily. While period British and Indian racial consciousness held no genocidal intent, its ethnocentric supremacy was certainly odious and was often used to justify imperial domination with its attendant degradations and violence. With this caution in mind, a broad overview of the history of ethnological endeavors in India provides a helpful introduction to our particular topic by demonstrating how, despite the supposed secular science of evolutionary theory, racial narratives only gradually disengaged from the religious concerns which so fully informed them initially.

The biblical paradigm remained influential enough in the eighteenth century—despite the European realization of continents and peoples not described in the Bible—that some Britons attempted to understand Indians (and themselves) in relation to Japhet, Shem, and Ham. According to Genesis 10, following their liberation from the flood-enduring ark, the families of these sons of Noah repopulated the earth. Indeed, another source of British antiquarian interest in folklore derived in part from the use of both physical and oral evidence to trace family lineages back to Noah.[58] As empirical science eroded the authority of the Bible, observable and, then, quantifiable evidence became more respected. So, as one step in such an accommodation, the eighteenth-century taxonomer Carolus Linnaeus expanded the biblical paradigm to accommodate the Columbian discoveries by dividing the world into four races: *Homo Americanus*, *Homo Europaeus*, *Homo Asiaticus*, and *Homo Afer*. Each had a set of inherent qualities—such that Europeans were fickle, inventive, and keen while Asians were grave, avaricious, and dignified.[59] As a second step, while not entirely abandoning a biblical framework, Linnaeus' contemporary, William Jones, promoted a fourfold vision of humanity that relied primarily on linguistic evidence.

It was through such linguistic scholarship that the cornerstone categories of India's racial narratives—Aryans and Dravidians—first became defined. While Jones in Calcutta established the notion of a shared linguistic family with which the term *Aryan*—borrowed from Sanskrit—later would be associated, F. W. Ellis in Madras first publicized the concept of what we now identify as a "Dravidian" language family in 1816, although again, the specific term arose only later. In both instances, early usage associated the words with both a people and a language. While Aryans generally were understood to have originated from outside the subcontinent, Ellis proposed that Dravidian languages represented the original languages of South Asia. As historian Thomas Trautmann points out, the work of Ellis and his collaborators "validates the existing classification while revealing its hitherto hidden

[†††] The biblical association did not necessarily isolate the notion of race from violent discrimination. Many American slave-holders justified enslaving Africans based on Noah's curse of Canaan, his son Ham's son (Genesis 9:25).

rationale" of the popular notion of two Indian language families (Sanskrit and south Indian), in exactly the same manner that Darwin's theory of natural selection validated the implicit logic of Linnaeus's classification (differentiating species from one another, yet organizing them into families). In fact, Darwin drew upon the metaphor of the genealogical tree that developed to arrange languages both relationally and temporally with one another. This demonstrates yet another instance in which one coalescing discipline borrowed from another in answer to the scientistic urge to fashion totalizing metanarratives. Over time, however, the linguistic metanarrative had to adjust to an important change in classification. For the first half of the nineteenth century, most authors viewed all aboriginal languages as Dravidian. However, ethnological research increasingly challenged this presupposition and, so, gradually the category *tribal* sundered along linguistic lines. This meant that while some tribes (like those of Rajmahal) remained Dravidian speakers, others (such as the Mundas) were afforded an independent language category.[60] Significantly, this turn also demonstrated the permanent decline of Noachian ethnology in linguistic classification, as modern research increasingly defied the efforts of those who sought to accommodate it to the tripartite paradigm of humanity.

Despite this gradual turning away from biblical authority, religion remained very much on the minds of Europeans seeking the origins of Indians. Even as late nineteenth-century Europeans relied less on language comparisons and more on physiological comparisons as evidence of racial difference, they extended the early linguists' association of language with religion by coupling physiology to this train of thought.[‡‡‡] They sought to identify "pure" Aryans and Dravidians—unadulterated by intermixing—according to anthropometric measurements *and* by the histories of linguistic and religious change during the last few millennia. In the first third of the nineteenth century, some Europeans viewed individual castes as manifesting hereditary dispositions. Thus arose the notions of "criminal castes" (like Thugs) and of "martial castes" (like Rajputs)[61] that figured so prominently in period efforts to control crime and recruit soldiers. One of the best examples of this perspective can be found in the series of volumes compiled by Captain A. H. Bingley for army recruiters, such as *Hand Book on Rajputs* (1899), which outlined the purported historical origins, geographical distribution, religious customs, and personal characteristics of the various Rajput subcastes. Bingley completed similar books on Brahmans, Dogras, and Sikhs, as well as one on Jats, Gujars, and Ahirs. As race theories and interracial concerns gained in popularity, the apparently timeless, endogamous nature of castes promised multiple reservoirs of pure, unadulterated racial "stock." But this was only in ideal conditions. For instance, while describing their particular practices, Bingley lamented in regard to the Rajputs of Shahabad that they were not as easily recognized as western Rajputs, "as the mixture of blood and impurity of descent have destroyed the purity of the type."[62]

‡‡‡ Christian theology often undermined racial ideology with an implicit universalism, although this slowly lost ground from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Porter 2004, 283–284.

Just as this problem of caste "impurities" frustrated ethnologists, so a lack of distinct linguistic traits among castes obstructed linguists in their studies. Both found hope in the coalescence of another metacategory that apparently complemented caste: tribe. Supposedly more isolated from racial miscegenation and linguistic contamination, the groups variously described as "aboriginal," "tribal," and "Adivasi"[§§§] became focus points for the new discipline of ethnology as it emerged in South Asia because they seemed to offer clearly delineated biological and linguistic categories. Throughout these deliberations, religion served as a *marker* of racial change, quite different from its *causal* role in many British histories of Indian civilization, such as that of James Mill. Hence, efforts to connect the two main tribes associated with the Chainpur region—the Cheros and Kharwars—to a subcontinental history of racial flows demonstrates how evolutionary comparison became manifest in considerations of race and was extended into deliberations on religion.

### *Racial and civilizational evolution*

For Chandrasekhara Banurji writing in the late 1870s, the Mundeswari temple perched atop a pinnacle of the Kaimur Range represented more than an example of ancient architecture. Rather, the deputy magistrate viewed it as a monument to historical conflicts that had unfolded on Chainpur's surrounding plain, just as surely as the Plassey monument marked a battle that heralded the advent of British rule in Bengal. "Chyapur appears to have been the field where each successive conqueror had to unsheath his sword," Banurji declared.[63] However, the combatants Banurji envisions did not represent modern, dueling polities but ancient, clashing races. The temple's name itself, meaning "goddess of Munda," evidences for the author the triumph of "the protector of the Aryan invader" over Munda and Chunda, two aboriginal leaders who were also brothers. In regard to a puranic narrative describing the brothers as *dayuta*s,[****] and repeating the geologic trope of unearthing, he concludes, "Beneath the crust of mythology the story… appears to have the foundation in fact."[64] For Banruji, the imperative to record this story derives from the fact that the aboriginal Kaimur Range "race" represents "a decayed and decaying people inhabiting together a neglected spot of the Empire."[65] Repeating the language of decline, Banurji declares "at present, Chyapur is a decayed and decaying place," although currently inhabited by the descendants of those who defeated the "aborigine."[66] The contrast between Banurji's depiction of these hill inhabitants and that of Francis Buchanan demonstrates the distance covered by ethnological studies between the start and near end of the nineteenth century. Additionally, consideration of the influential work of W. W. Hunter and Herbert Risley reflects the shifts that accompanied the near total association of race with physiological and civilizational evolution.

§§§ A Hindustani term meaning "original inhabitant" in use by 1941.

**** By *dayuta*, Banurji appears to refer to *daitya* (antagonists to deities).

Buchanan's survey took him into the southernmost parts of Shahabad district where, bordering the Gangetic Valley like a steep rampart, the Kaimur Hills stretch as part of the Deccan plateau's northern escarpment, known as the Vindhyan Range. In many parts of Bengal province, the inhabitants of such hill country posed challenges to British rule because their stubborn independence from lowland states and their formidable defenses in forest fastnesses made them difficult to dominate. In Calcutta, a tombstone to Collector Augustus Clevland[††††] (d. 1784) still stands, celebrating his use of conciliation in the Rajmahal Hills of eastern Bihar, by which "he civilized a Savage Race of Mountaineers who for Ages had existed in a state of Barbarism." It rejoices—in the more frank language of his era—that he was able to "reduce them to obedience." Another memorial, a regular stop for British travellers going up the country and erected purportedly by local residents of Bhagulpur where he was stationed, exults that Clevland "inspired [savages] with a taste for the arts of civilized life, and attached them to the British Government by a conquest over their minds, the most permanent as the most rational mode of domination."[67] Such language demonstrates that various hill people drew the attention of some individuals and the government, who commonly categorized these communities according to a civilizational ranking and correlated their improvement with their self-subordination.

However, as Buchanan moves among hill residents in Shahabad—primarily Cheros and Kharwars—he does not view them through the civilizational frames employed by the authors of Clevland's epitaphs or the evolutionary paradigm used by later authors, but primarily with a focus on assessing factors of potential political concern. This becomes clear in regard to their qualities that he decides to succinctly categorize, such as religion and language. For instance, in the section of his *Account of the District of Shahabad* on "religion and sects," he characterizes both groups as Hindus, describing their degree of Hindu purity (in consultation with "the Pandit of the survey," Ramajai Batacharji, as was his norm), while commenting on the extent to which they intermixed with other groups that he interchangeably describes as "castes," "races," and "tribes." Of the Kharwars, Buchanan declares, "These have retained the features, by which the aboriginal tribes of the Vindhyan mountains are distinguished, just as entirely as the inhabitants of the Rajmahal hills, although, so far as I can learn, the whole Kharwars, both of this district and of Ramgar, speak an old or corrupted dialect of the Hindi language." As for Cheros, he remarks, "Their features are strongly marked, as belonging to the aboriginal tribes of the Vindhya mountains, but in this district they speak only the Hindi dialect."[68] Despite the parallel drawn between the inhabitants of the Kaimur Hills and those of the Rajmahal Hills with whom Clevland engaged, Buchanan makes no characterization regarding their relative state of civilization. Instead, he categorizes them according to (a) their hill location, (b) their status as original, aboriginal inhabitants, (c) their language, and (d) as Hindus with a status prescribed by a Brahmanical order of purity. Moreover, the surveyor uses his (or Ramajai's) reading of the Puranas to contradict claims regarding the ancient

[††††] Commonly also rendered "Cleveland." I follow the spelling on his tombstone.

presence of caste while noting the mutability of purity status among some current castes.[69] The offhand remark Buchanan makes about the different "features" of the groups may relate to physical appearance, but may refer instead to their language: even his note that intermarriages among Cheros "have altered their features" does not entirely settle the issue. This ambiguity shows that physiology clearly does not dominate his analysis, as further evidenced by the fact that the appearance of neither the Cheros nor the Kharwars appears significant enough to warrant an entirely distinct category of comparison, as the race-minded scholarship of Hunter, Banurji, and Risley will later demand of the "tribals" they differentiate from Hindus and others. Indeed, Buchanan's consideration of these two groups under the category of "Sudra" does not differentiate them from other "Hindu" tribes/castes of this ranking.

Instead of serving an evolutionary—either biological or civilizational—metanarrative, Buchanan's particular interest in the Cheros stems from his effort to determine the political history of the Chainpur region. Hence, the first chapter that accounts for the inhabitants of the district begins with the Cheros, whom he views as a caste and responsible for Shahabad's oldest architectural ruins, including the Mundeswari temple. Locals informed Buchanan that the Chero brothers Munda and Chandu once lived in the area, Munda as raja. Although Buchanan relates Ramajai's counter-assertion that Munda was not a Chero but a *daitya* (based on the pandit's reading of the *Markandiya Purana*), he dismisses this. Instead, he favors the local narrative because of the evidence the temple affords that Munda was a minor local chief after whom the temple was named. Meanwhile, he explains how Chainpur's "proper name" is Chanupur (based on Chandu's former residence there) and how a ruined temple near the reputed home of Harshu was probably a Chero's. Indeed, Buchanan takes the still then used though ancient name for the district, Kikata, as further evidence of Chero rule.[70] Overall, Buchanan relies upon archaeological, religious, linguistic, and folkloric traces as evidence for an ancient Chero presence, demonstrating the interwoven character of these anthropological pursuits aimed at mapping the political landscape and their slow displacement of the textual authority formerly promoted by orientalists.

Despite its broad reliance on Buchanan's description of Shahabad six decades later, the description of the "Cherus" in the Shahabad volume of *A Statistical Account of Bengal* (1877) takes a marked turn away from the surveyor's approach. "Their physical characteristics are high cheek-bones, small eyes obliquely set, with corresponding eyebrows, low, broad noses and large mouths, with protuberant lips," write the volume's authors: D. B. Allen, A. W. Mackie, and H. H. Risley. Similarly, they remark, "The low Kharwars are extremely similar to the Santals, being very dark, with pyramidal-shaped, low noses, thick protuberant lips, and cheek-bones which project so far that their temples are hollow." Meanwhile, while classifying the district's population according to nationality, tribe, or caste, the Shahabad volume follows the 1871–1872 census as it categorized Cheros and Kharwars neither as Hindus nor as castes (as Buchanan had) but, instead, as "aboriginal tribes."[71] This divergence from Buchanan might be ascribed to

W. W. Hunter—the ICS officer and prominent author who edited all 20 volumes of *A Statistical Account of Bengal*—and his commitment to ethnology. This neophyte science rapidly gained influential adherents in the mid-nineteenth century (even though its name was coined only in 1842) who sought to establish evolutionary metanarratives.

Victorian-era ethnologists pursued a science of humanity based on evolutionism and racialism[‡‡‡‡] both in Briton and abroad. As keenly as they sought to racially classify peoples of the subcontinent, they also worked to racially distinguish both their co-inhabitants in Britain—differentiating, for instance, "the Teutons" from the Irish—and the "'manly' upright Briton" from other European imperialists. Indeed, in its effort to organize records of physical measurements,[72] the early Ethnographic Survey of India sought the opinion of Sir William Turner, a professor of anatomy at Edinburgh University who participated in an unofficial ethnological survey of Britain.[73] Ethnologists often imagined a world of perpetual racial strife in which superior races not only subordinated inferior ones, but also had to safeguard their own bloodline from the degenerative effects of miscegenation.[74] Thus, each race's subnarrative in humanity's overall evolutionary arc had its own possible trajectory.

The interrelatedness of physiology, language, civilization, and religion expressed in Hunter's work reflected a much larger effort to define racial groups on the subcontinent. In 1869, the Ethnological Society of London proposed that specialists survey South Asian regions according to all these criteria. The society's president and "Darwin's bulldog," T. H. Huxley, conceived of India as defined by the interactions of dark-skinned Dravidian-language speakers and pale-skinned Aryans, much as Hunter did.[75] In these views, ethnologists expressed a very different meaning for the term *race* than Buchanan and his contemporaries had. In comparison with an early nineteenth-century sense that it connoted a generally related body of people, Victorian ethnologists viewed race as one of the primary factors shaping human tendencies and capabilities.[76] As Trautmann has demonstrated, the concept *race* separated from *nation* as it became increasingly and specifically associated with hereditary physical features in contrast with the political body of a country.[77] For Buchanan, physiology served as a vague co-indicator of race/nation, while for Hunter and most period ethnologists, it provided *the* measureable difference between races.

This new emphasis on a history of races in which they not only collided but also transformed due to their relation with one another and their environment was prompted in no small part by the revolution in European notions of human history. Many early modern Christian Westerners conceived of a short span between the original, Eden-dwelling couple and the present—only six thousand years according to the Bishop Ussher's popular biblical calculations.[§§§§] Just as geologist Charles Lyell had demonstrated

‡‡‡‡ I use the term "racialism" to connote scholarly investigations about race and "racist" to refer to social discrimination based on race without suggesting that these did not, in many instances, converge.

§§§§ The sixteenth-century Bishop Ussher calculated that God created the world in 4004 B.C.E.

that the earth both was far older than that and was prone to constant, gradual changes that could culminate in significant alterations (demonstrating that Indic notions of *yuga*s and *kalpa*s of incredibly long duration were closer to geological fact than biblical chronology), Darwin's contribution of natural selection to preexisting notions of evolution was predicated on a vastly lengthier time span of human alteration. Hence, the pre-Darwinian William Jones defended conservative notions of biblical time even as he tracked human diversity through language comparisons and projected a narrative of Aryan expansion from central Asia into Europe and India.[78] In contrast, Hunter compares the existence of a few resilient, isolated tribes that evidence the disappearance of prehistoric tribes in India with the survival of fossilized footprints that testify to the extinction of gigantic birds in Connecticut.[79] Ethnologists of the late nineteenth century considered racial differences as empirical evidence for both the prehistoric and historic past, viewing them as particularly helpful given the supposed paucity of reliable historiographical material from South Asia. This represented a shift from an analytic focus on language to one on race; but this did not occur overnight.[80] Hunter explicitly promotes racial views in his *Annals of Rural Bengal* (1868), in which he envisions that province as a brutally contested racial borderland. While for millennia the "tall, fair-complexioned race" of the Aryans gradually had secured regional mastery over "the black squat races," now the new, English-speaking Aryan immigrants wrestle for their own control. He recognizes that racial purity had been compromised at times, but therein lay for him a cautionary tale.[81]

For Hunter, the contrast between Aryans and aboriginal tribes does not stop at physiological difference. These races diverge in their inherent sensibilities and proclivities, which are manifest in their lifestyles, religions, and intellectual pursuits. Hence, Hunter spells out that Aryan superiority was not just a matter of physiological stature but also of language, diet, and religion. In fact, religion serves as the primary field of evidence for Hunter's conclusions, with aboriginal polytheism clashing against Aryan conceptions of the unity of god. While the Aryan believes in personal immortality, devotion to benevolent deities, and prayer offerings to the gods, the aborigine purportedly embraces death's finality, devotion to malignant demons, and physical offerings to the gods. Religion also provides evidence of Hunter's greatest concern: the mutual influence of the two races on one another. He worries that, just as sexual miscegenation can create generations with mixed physical features, religious comingling can do the same: to the detriment of the superior religion. In his *Annals*, Hunter describes the worship of both the Shiv lingam and of the deified dead as contemporary elements of Hinduism that degrade the original Vedic religion. These phenomena—of which he finds exact examples at the Mundeswari temple and Harsu Brahm's shrine—supposedly resulted from the absorption of aboriginal religious practices into the Aryan religion.[82] Hunter's assertions further demonstrate historian Susan Bayly's important conclusions about contemporary race attitudes, in which she claims that many British ethnologists projected religious stages onto a ladder of physical evolution upon which Christianity stood tallest. Besides serving whatever personal investments these ethnologists might

have had in Christianity, such a religio-biological teleology helped shield them from anti-Darwin attackers who claimed that evolution undermined Christianity.[83]

According to Hunter, mutual influence between Aryans and aboriginals has led to diversity not only in physical appearance, but also in Hindu religious practices and social groups. He asserts that, just as scores of physical gradations can be found between "the black-skinned, human-sacrificing, flesh-eating forest tribes" living atop the mountains and "tall olive-coloured" vegetarian Brahmans who dwell in large settlements like Chainpur, so variations of the purest examples of each populations' religions similarly can be found. He relates how discussions with Brahmans suggest that the apparent differences between their views and many popular Hindu beliefs were caused not by educational differences, but racial ones. Hunter decides that the collusion of racial and religious intermixing brought about the caste system as currently practiced. As opposed to north Bihar where Manu's fourfold *varna* system can still be detected, he argues that in south Bihar the ancient system has been eclipsed through contact with aboriginals, which has created the divisions of Aryans, non-Aryans, and mixed classes. Thus, Hunter concludes, the caste system—with all its apparent evils—was born from interbreeding between the twice-borns***** and the Sudras (whom he equates with aboriginals).[84] Therefore, far from the static and singular portrait of India that some Britons espoused, ethnologists like Hunter portrayed diversity and dynamism.

Many Britons sought to craft a singular narrative that would totalistically account for the variance they found in Indian physiologies, civilizations, and religions. Some found in Darwinian evolution and post-Darwinian social evolution a paradigm that both explained the dynamic of change and that legitimated a hierarchy of stages.

| (−) | (+) |
|---|---|
| dark-skinned | light-skinned |
| primitive | civilized |
| polytheism, idolatry | monotheism, aniconism |

Each set existed less as a binary than as two ends of a spectrum, with many middling positions in between. Initially, Britons had expected these elements to correlate with one another, and yet the earliest of those who visited India discovered architecture that demonstrated a civilizational sophistication beyond what they expected from the dark-complexioned people who inhabited most of the country. Later, British investigations in Sanskrit literature revealed philosophical and theological reflections surpassing what Hindu devotions to myriad, multiple-armed deities had led them to expect. Jones's development of the Indo-European language idea provided a model on which the coexistence of these seemingly contradictory phenomena could be explained as easily as the

***** According to the *Manavadharmashastra*, to which Hunter repeatedly refers as authoritative, the twice-borns include the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas but not the fourth *varna*, the Sudras.

coexistence of such seemingly divergent languages as Hindi and Tamil. The Aryan-invasion model provided a structure to understand linguistic and racial diversity, while offering an important lesson in the consequences of racial and religious miscegenation. Tribals played an important role in many of these narratives as the originators of each of the negatively valued characteristics and the agents of change who acted—hereditarily and culturally—on Aryan societies to create "mixed classes" while embodying the hereditary, civilizational, and religious results of intermixing.

Hunter and others of his ethnological school did not value diversity because it represented the degradation of distinctive racial and religious characteristics, two of the more important elements presumably required to forge (and identify) a nation. However, this simultaneously comforted some Britons. As they warily eyed the mid-nineteenth-century unification of the numerous German principalities into a powerful, single nation,[85] some British authors assuaged concerns about emergent Indian nationalism (and reinforced justifications for foreign domination) with descriptions of a racially, religiously, and linguistically fractured society. It is not surprising that this type of definitive assessment of Indian nationalism's prospects would be welcome, coming as it did following the Santal rebellion of 1855 and the sepoy rebellion of 1857–1858. As unexpected as the latter, the uprising by Santal tribesmen targeted both Bengali zamindars and British control of the same hills of eastern Bihar where Clevland had worked.[†††††] Each event proved both the divisions among Indian (and particularly Bihari) communities and the ability of Britons to overestimate the population's goodwill toward their rule. In the minds of those who justified British dominion as necessary in lieu of national unity, the divisions of race, caste, and religion that once had condemned the subcontinent to "Islamic" invasion in the past, also preempted a national spirit in the present.[86] Meanwhile, the now-debased racial quality of India's Aryans made them inferior to the more commodious racial mixing among Aryans and others in Britain,[87] just as—in Hunter's words—"the burned out lights" of Hindu religion stood as a shadow in the glare of Christianity's "more perfect light."[88]

## *Taxonomy and taking the measure of race*

In the writing that following his contribution to the Shahabad volume edited by Hunter, Herbert Risley (d. 1911) perceived the same cautionary lesson, even as he offered a more scientific (read: quantifiable) basis for narrating his version of this evolutionary history of racial/civilizational/religious stages: "As each wave of conquerors, Greek, Scythian, Arab, Moghal, [*sic*] that entered the country by land became more or less absorbed in the indigenous population, their physique degenerated, their individuality vanished, their energy was sapped, and dominion passed from their hands into those of more vigorous successors.

[†††††] Far from Hunter's image of the forest-hiding autochthonous tribe, ICS officer L. S. S. O'Malley's depiction of the Santals with whom the revolt originated—given in his gazetteer of 1910—explains that they were emigrants to the area and had cleared the forest to establish villages and pastures. O'Malley 1999 (1910), 45–46.

*Ex Occidente Imperium*; the genius of Empire in India has come to her from the West; and can be maintained only by constant infusions of fresh blood from the same source."[89] However successful for the men of Hunter's generation, for Risley there was room still to improve the evidence for this narrative through an ethnology more firmly fixed as a science. An Indian Civil Service officer previously assigned to the Statistical Survey of India, he relentlessly pursued the establishment of an ethnological survey of India, central to which would be anthropometry, the science of physiological measurement. For Risley, the most "primitive" and "wildest tribes of India" represented "a unique mine of unexplored material" that would yield data sought by E. B. Tylor and the other leading lights of the new discipline of anthropology. American anthropologists had first advanced anthropometry during the 1830s as a means of proving their theories of polygenism, the belief that different races originated separately. Among those opposing this stance were Christians who sought to defend the monogenesis depicted in their readings of Genesis.[90] Monogenesis allowed antislavery activists, among others, to argue for a common humanity, while polygenesis bolstered arguments for radical human difference. Another important ethnological debate turned on the question of whether environmental factors could hereditarily alter a race's physiology. By the turn of the century, the Royal Anthropological Institute sent a deputation to the British government promoting an anthropometric survey in the United Kingdom "in order to test the foundation for fears, then widely expressed, as to the physical deterioration of the population."[91]

Risley demonstrated enthusiasm for ethnology and anthropometry early in his successful career. Following the 1881 census, the Government of Bengal entrusted him with a survey of Bengal in light of the previous decade's swelling of ethnographic interest and the Government of India's directive to investigate connections between caste and occupation. The survey of that province targeted the largest castes in each district, based on census statistics.[92] Risley simultaneously published his findings in both an encyclopedic four-volume book entitled *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* and a double-volume work of anthropometric data on selected tribes and castes (1891). Not everyone in the government appeared convinced, and the census report for 1891 sagely intoned, "The conclusions to be deduced from these contributions are awaited."[93] In 1900, although the government denied a petition by the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) that the government simultaneously execute an ethnographic survey with the census,[94] it made Risley the director of the newly constituted Ethnographic Survey of India (ESI) to follow his stint as all-India census director for 1901. Of the considerable allotment of 21,000 rupees for the ESI, 6000 rupees was earmarked for anthropometric records. Despite the forced administrative disconnect between the ESI and census, Risley confidently announced "measurements are proceeding and will be ready in time for my Census Report, in which they will form the basis of the classification of the people."[95] This was the grand scientistic promise of anthropometry: that racial classification could sidestep a subjective process of racial determination (complicated given that nineteenth-century Indians seldom identified with racial classifications) and be established quantitatively instead. And the government shared this promise globally (see appendix C).

Risley's theories relied upon the notion that the characteristics of racial types expressed themselves through the history on the subcontinent. The concept of typology—which posits distinct types definable by essential qualities—ran counter to Darwin's thinking, and Risley attempted to both respect the great naturalist's perspective even as he projected human types. Like Darwin, he recognized the great variance in the physical form among the individuals of any particular population.[96] Nevertheless, he insisted on categorizing caste and tribal communities according to abstract racial types. Risley identifies seven racial types[‡‡‡‡‡] in his effort to chart the racial composition of the subcontinent and emplot a narrative of racial arrival and intermixture. Although he admits that little evidence survived that explained India's racial genesis, he trusts that by observing dynamics today, a fair estimate of the past could be narrated. Thus, Risley postulates that the Dravidians probably inhabited the Gangetic Valley longer than any other race and that they enjoyed a separate coexistence with the ancestors of Indo-Aryans, who emigrated from the northwest and settled in Punjab. However, a second Indo-Aryan invasion surged into the Gangetic Valley, interbred with the Dravidians, and gave rise not only to the Vedas, caste, "and the whole fantastic structure of orthodox ritual and usage," but also to the Aryo-Dravidian type. Later, an invasion of Scythian nomads from the West led to a Scytho-Dravidian racial type that adopted Aryan languages and Buddhism, the latter slowly succumbing to magic and metaphysics so that the population became Hindu. In his description of Bengal's Mongolo-Dravidians (for whose origins he offers no account), Risley demonstrates his inability to reconcile typology to Darwin's approach when he declares that despite intermixing, if "the type is regarded as a whole the racial figures are seen to be comparatively distinct."[97] In other words, an essential set of qualities can define a population once those qualities can be found among some individuals in that population (and their absence among others is overlooked).

Risley argues, as did others, that both the Hindu caste system and the Muslims' own caste-like divisions minimalized interbreeding, allowing for racial types unequalled in their distinctiveness anywhere else in the world.[98] Meanwhile, secluded tribes represented biological survivals that needed hurried measurement before the modern world defeated the isolation that once preserved their uniqueness. Just as Buchanan created a set of quantifications by which others could identify each fish he collected and classified, Risley seeks to create an index based on dimensions and proportions of the nose and the head of specimens from the major human "types." Hence measurements of his four Chero subjects contrasted with those of his one hundred Kharwar subjects, resulting in respective cephalic indices (based on the length and breadth of the head) of 72.4 and 75.5 and average nasal indices of 87.3 and 89.7.[99]

Given the urge to quantification in scientism, that ethnologists should seek a correlation between racial type and physical measurement cannot surprise us, even as it repels us,

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[‡‡‡‡‡] The seven racial types Risley identified in India included Dravidian, Mongoloid, Indo-Aryan, Mongoloid-Dravidian, Aryo-Dravidian, Scytho-Dravidian, and Turko-Iranian.

living as we do in the historical shadow of Nazi eugenics. Nascent interest in this approach was visible even in the early nineteenth century, when traveller and author Montgomery Martin collected skulls for the purposes of phrenological studies as he visited various countries (how he obtained the human remains, he did not indicate) before donating them to the Asiatic Society Museum in Calcutta. Meanwhile, Hindu reformer Rammohan Roy sent twelve "Hindu crania" to Edinburgh for anthropometric study. These were followed, upon his death, by a cast of his own skull "which was not only of a very unusual size for a Hindoo, but even for the generality of Englishmen," according to Martin, who provided his readers its exact dimensions.[100] In general, when investigators sought "average specimens" of a race to send to colleagues, museums, or exhibitions, they dispatched an individual who met their criteria for the racial norm.

Risley's numbers provide an excellent illustration of the illusionary power that can imbue certain forms of classification. While his cephalic and nasal indices for Cheros and Kharwars purport to quantify a physical difference between the two groups, his own data—meticulously reproduced in large tables in the popularly published *People of India* (1908)—demonstrates both the physiological variability within any two comparative groups and the reliance on classification to make the difference convincing. So, for instance, while Chero and Kharwar noses might appear statistically different because of the indices Risley calculated, these indices represent only the averages of the measurements taken from all the individuals observed. Risley arrived at an index for the Cheros of 87.3 by averaging the proportions derived from the measurements of four noses, the smallest at 76 and the largest at 95. As would be expected given the greater number of specimens, the one hundred Kharwar noses demonstrate even greater variability, with the smallest index being 69 and the largest 113. Hence, all Chero noses fit within the range of Kharwar noses. The same holds for all measurements and proportions made of these two groups. The distinction in this case, then, relies *not* on an absolute difference in measurement (e.g., all Cheros have longer noses than Kharwars) but entirely upon the classification of "Chero" and "Kharwar." That is to say, Risley had the length and breadth of one hundred and four noses measured and distinguished between them not based on those measurements (noses between 173 and 180 are Chero, and between 181 and 190 are Kharwar). Instead, at this level of identification, the noses were labeled based on who claimed them (who were otherwise nameless and, except in their quantifiable physiology, invisible). In other words, the statistics provide no definitive information in these instances, only the scientistic illusion of what we would today term "hard data."[101]

Such reified racial taxa proved so inappropriate for human classification because humans did not reproduce within the taxa scholars projected. Authors attempted to draw species-like distinctions between "races" when no such distinctions existed. Most species cannot interbreed, so a tiger and a leopard, although both felines of the Panthera genus, cannot produce offspring blending features from both sides. Humans have no such obstacles. Imagining deep devotional differences among Hindus and Muslims or stark occupational differences between Rajputs and Darzis offered a much simpler method of

intellectually partitioning Indians because convincing numbers of representatives from these groups could readily enough be found worshipping in temples or praying in mosques, employed as soldiers or working as tailors. However, any small-sized community of a supposed race demonstrated physiological diversity, with greater diversity often found *within* a purportedly uniform group than between any two groups. Risley recognized this problem, explaining that the "endless varieties" resulting from racial intermixing made it impossible as of yet to agree upon a common system of classifying them.[102] This conclusion did not, however, deter him from proposing such a classification.

Yet another limitation for Risley's racialist scheme was that few of those to whom the one hundred and four noses belonged would likely have claimed themselves as "Dravidian," the racial type to which Risley assigned Cheros and Kharwars. Meanwhile, the same limits on his taxonomical claims described above pertained to the larger categories he attempted to distinguish quantitatively. So, for instance, the nasal indices for all twelve Ahom subjects from Assam—classified as Mongoloid—also fit within the Kharwar Range, making the quantifications from this racial type taxonomically indistinguishable from one of the Dravidian type.[103] Nevertheless Risley persisted in his absolute classificatory claims, even mounting a retrograde argument correlating language and race, despite criticisms by authors such as William Crooke and Max Müller. The ESI's founding superintendent did so by attempting to correlate linguistic difference with unique physiological qualities that make some sounds (hence different languages) more possible than others.[104]

Overall, the scientistic ideal to classify Indians using species-like categories amplified the problems zoologists were encountering in their efforts to categorize animals, and underlay the basic categorical quandaries of the period. First, the effort to identify species according to essential characteristics as Linnaeus had would be abandoned by Darwin, who focused on the individual variability within populations.[105] Nevertheless, British knowledge projects seldom abandoned the endeavor to create essentially discrete categories of Indians based on supposedly unique religious, linguistic, and/or physiological differences. Second, the illusion of species-like categories among humans that informed these efforts ignored the problems naturalists encountered with the category of "species." Hence the profound inconvenience to their categorical imperative experienced by so many authors in the face of intersections among religions, intermixing among languages, and interbreeding among races. The effort to realize the ideal of species haunts scientists into the twenty-first century as they have failed to find consensus for a definition of the term in a manner that applies to all organisms, thus undermining what many would prefer to see as the natural world's self-apparent category.[§§§§§] In other words, efforts to divide all creatures into mutually exclusive groups according to morphology, breeding, and genealogy have all failed to be universally applicable. The final problem with species identification is that, while animals and plants can be identified according to the biologist's

§§§§§ After all, Plato understood the world to be naturally divided, Linnaeus viewed species and other biological taxa as being derived from God, while Darwin saw them as the result of natural processes. Ereshefsky 2001, 3, 40.

whim (what self-respecting beetle, after all, would call itself *Agra vation*?), humans self-identify themselves. Because they often associate with more than one group and because their identities vary according to social context, individuals prove difficult to definitively identify. Here, then, we discover the most enduring, imperceptible, and damaging legacy of scientism in the subcontinent: the conceit that methodical observation and measurement could reveal species-like divisions of South Asian societies.

The Government of India's 1901 resolution establishing the ESI unwittingly explicated this process by which data was collected and fitted to presumed categories in a manner that simply reinforced the supposed naturalness of those categories: "For the purposes of legislation, of judicial procedure, of famine relief, of sanitation and dealings with epidemic disease, and of almost every form of executive action, and ethnographic survey of India, and a record of the customs of the people is as necessary an incident of good administration as a cadastral survey of the land and a record of the rights of its tenants. The census provides the necessary statistics: *it remains to bring out and interpret the facts which lie behind the statistics*."[106] The government's association of mapping and measuring land along with the enumeration and measurement of people, and its confidence that the numbers provide facts that must only be uncovered, demonstrate not only the contemporary confidence in numbers, but also how unproblematic—at least for those making use of the knowledge projects, as opposed to many of those executing them on the ground—the categories were upon which relied all of these enterprises.

### *The failure of ethnology, and its pernicious survival*

Given the widespread acknowledgement of Risley's authoritative research, the scientistic preference for quantified information, and the useful conclusions his investigations offered regarding inherent indigenous racial division that militated against a coherent Indian nationality, one might expect Risley's metanarrative and the metacategories that informed it to have won the day. However, the struggle to reconcile uncertain data with ill-defined categories had proven the weaknesses of ethnology, even as some scholars protested its methods and conclusions. Despite these failings and the eventual decline of anthropometry's legitimacy, ethnology's ability to influence—and be influenced by—Indian perspectives remained intact, however diminished. Hindu and Muslim nationalists successfully adopted various components of the narrative to craft evolutionary comparisons of their own, reworking hierarchies in their favor and valorizing the communities they sought to define and energize. Hindu nationalists like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar relied on a Brahmanic ethnology empowered in part by the European merger of Brahman and racialist categories.

Between 1872 and 1908—during a flurry of racialist publishing on the topic of India's tribes and castes—the Chainpur region figured into the ethnological research of at least nine authors. Specifically, Hunter, Risley, Chandrasekhara Banurji, Alexander Cunningham, William Crooke, missionary M. A. Sherring, former commissioner of

Chota Nagpur Edward Tuite Dalton, inspector of Bihar's registration offices C. F. Magrath, and district officer L. R. Forbes all referred to the Cheros, if not also the Kharwars, of the Kaimur hills. Riding the wave of intellectual fashion, Dalton, Crooke, Sherring, and Risley all penned encyclopedic works on the castes and tribes of Bengal and/or the North-Western Provinces, each of which became oft-cited. The divergences among their accounts of the Kaimur tribals reflect the failure of ethnologists to reconcile the diversity of the populations they observed with the rigid racial categories they created. For example, in terms of physiology, Dalton—whose *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (1872) served as a touchstone for most ethnological accounts that followed—described Cheros to "vary in colour, but are usually a light brown," while Cunningham portrayed them as "very dark," and Sherring opted to offer no physical description at all. Crooke disagreed with Dalton when he described the Cheros of Bengal as having Mongolian features, explaining "he should rather have said, of the Kolarian or Dravidian type." Hunter argued that Kolarians and Dravidians represented two types, not one. Meanwhile, the issue of the demise of Chero rule in Chainpur initially raised by Buchanan remained unresolved. Their expulsion from the area was attributed by Banurji to the Harihobans, by Cunningham to the same but under the name Maukhari, and by Magrath to the Siviras tribe, while Crooke declared this last group to be the same as the Cheros and agreed with Sherring that the Suir conquered them. All but Crooke and Cunningham viewed local examples of architecture as monuments to that ancient reign, while Crooke derided the entire notion that Cheros could have built the buildings locals ascribed to them, crediting "Aryan Buddhists" instead.[107]

Meanwhile, racialism and anthropometry encountered increasing resistance from many European intellectuals and British officials. Crooke used his *Natives of Northern India* (1907) as a platform from which to attack Risley's theories. In a book otherwise thoroughly descriptive, Crooke repeatedly criticizes to his general audience what he judges as Risley's overly reductive arguments. Perhaps most poignantly, he agreeably repeats an indignant protest by Max Müller to resist the conflation of linguistic and racial categories: "We have made our own terminology for the classification of languages; let ethnologists make their own for the classification of skulls, and hair, and blood."[108] Meanwhile, Indian officials like Denzil Ibbetson, who would become lieutenant governor of Punjab and author a book on castes there, voiced a rising resistance to ethnology. While accepting a civilizational scale and differences between Aryans and non-Aryans, Ibbetson argued that castes represented flexible distinctions of power and status, not fixed manifestations of race. His willingness to eschew some of the reductionist logic that characterized Hunter's and Risley's views of caste allowed Ibbetson to recognize how certain Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu groups could move fluidly among castes, so that, for instance, a community of Rajputs might assert an Arab or Mughal identity.[109]

Authors like Ibbetson who exercised a caution in applying simplistic scientistic classifications often did so based on their experience working among Indians during district

postings, which challenged easy classifications. Many of these scholar-administrators, as Susan Bayly describes them, recognized the artificiality of the borders they drew[110] and actively resisted the universal claims that high officials and learned societies often favored. Magrath voiced his frustration with caste delineation given "the general ignorance of the Hindu on the subject of even his own particular caste."[111] Crooke declared that among the three presumed racial strains of northern India, "these have now become so intermixed and confounded that it is impossible to say where one variety of man ends and another begins."[112] Even Risley understood this, as evident when he referred to the 1901 census data and declared that the "various types" did not precisely inhabit distinct geographic zones nor did any racial type solely occupy one locality. Yet in the next stroke of his pen nib, Risley argued that anyone traveling for a day will notice the significant change in physiology among those she passes,[113] presuming again that distinct identities can be abstracted from aggregate impressions. Meanwhile, despite their recognition of its inadequacy, Magrath obediently developed his list of Bihari castes and tribes for the census report, while Dalton created his "Hinduised Aborigines" category to hide the indeterminate distinction among groups appearing neither wholly Hindu nor aborigine (while also demonstrating the confusion of race, religion, and language).****** In sum, many of those writing within the ethnological paradigm were motivated enough by official directive or scholarly ambitions not to want to challenge its categories and metanarratives while, simultaneously, they also were committed to scientific research which did not allow them to dismiss all of the counter-evidence that others conveniently occluded.

Despite their disparate conclusions, ethnologists had their impact, creating an overall frame that proved resilient enough to resist attack even by authoritative critics who disapproved of them. For instance, in contrast with the earlier Buchanan, all eight authors describing the Chainpur region at this time referred to the Cheros as aborigines and/or as a tribe, in stated contrast with Aryans and/or castes. All agreed that Cheros were non-Aryans, with most classifying them racially and/or linguistically as "Kolian" or "Kolarian." The mutual imbrication of race and language demonstrates how, despite efforts to the contrary, a racial paradigm continued to subsume the earlier linguistic paradigm.[114] Hence, Britons coined "Kolarian" and "Dravidian" to describe certain language groups, yet most authors later ended up using the two terms to refer to races, even many who had objections to doing so. For instance, Crooke dragged his literary heels as he described "Indo-Aryans" and "Mongoloids" among South Asia's three main racial types, and when he got to "Dravidians" he declared it unsatisfactory "but now too well established to be abandoned."[115] This racialist hegemony also applied to the Aryan invasion narrative that fit into an evolutionary metanarrative which, in turn, relied upon caste and religion.

****** Dalton created the "third denomination" of Hinduised Aborigine given that millions among some tribes "are certainly non-Aryan" yet "lost their own language . . . and adopted much that is Hindu in the customs and religion." In other words, an awkward middling category was necessary for those Aborigines who appear non-Aryan, sound Aryan, and practice as Hindus. Dalton 1872, 2.

In each instance of racialist concern, the mutual fascination with the effects of cross-breeding meant that the taxonomical paradigm of the Sanskrit text *Manavadharmashastra* (sixth century B.C.E to sixth century C.E.) and other Brahmanic texts appeared to complement the evolutionary paradigm of scientism. By coupling the two, British and Indian authors crafted and promoted a Brahmanic evolutionary ethnology. Nearly all of the nine authors referred to Manu, aware of his four-*varna* division of society, their respective occupational assignments (sacrifier/teacher, ruler/warrior, trader, laborer), *and* Manu's recognition that new groups constantly emerged from the union of Brahman men with women of "lower" rank. In turn, yet more groups ("castes" in the parlance of our writers) developed due to sexual intercourse among mixed groups so outcastes slowly arose (or, rather, descended). Sherring, for one, viewed this as a helpful explanation for the existence of castes below Sudra ranking.[116]

Marrying Manu's social taxonomy to the Indo-European language model suggested the narrative of twice-borns bringing Sanskrit into South Asia from elsewhere. Some Britons concluded that Sanskrit-speaking, lighter-skinned Aryans had invaded and conquered a subcontinent of darker-skinned Sudras both because some Sanskrit texts ascribed each group a color (*varna* literally means "color") ranging from lightest to darkest (white for Brahmans, red for Kshatriyas, and yellow or brown for Vaisyas) and because these texts excluded Sudras from the twice-borns while assigning them the color black. Indeed, the author for the 1871 Madras census report referred to such a source to support his conclusion that Aryans had created caste in order to preserve their progeny's fair skins from the degeneration involved with intermixing among the black and brown races.[117] While some like Dalton contested this version and viewed Sudras as Aryans, others assumed Sudras had been among the first Indic inhabitants conquered by the Aryans. Regardless of these differences, the oft-repeated narrative cycle of invasion relied as heavily on civilized, lighter-complexioned, religiously sophisticated Aryans as it did on primitive, darker-complexioned, religiously benighted non-Aryans. All of the eight authors who deliberated upon the Cheros' origins agreed that they represented an aborigine tribe whose fortunes were curtailed by an invasion of Aryans/Hindus. According to them, whether pursued by Siviras or Harihobans, Chainpur's Cheros found safe haven only in the craggy confines of the Kaimur Range immediately behind Chainpur, where they since have had to negotiate with the Aryanizing and Hinduizing influence of the new dominant power that spread Hindi, Brahmanism, and "Aryan features."

Manu's impact—that is to say, the influence of contemporary Brahmans and Britons promoting Manu's vision—also demonstrated itself in debates among British authors regarding purity status. Sherring concluded that Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and some Vaisyas had preserved themselves only "from an occasional taint" of "low caste blood."[118] Dalton viewed Sudras as joining these three among the pure, while both distinguishing some aborigines, such as the Shahabad Cheros, as impure. Their mixed status was indicated by their Hindu-like religious devotions and their physical features that "have been considerably softened by the alliances with pure Hindu families." Dalton grouped Cheros under the

heading "Hinduised Aborigines and Broken Tribes."[119] Banurji concurred, as he noted that Cheros, in juxtaposition to Kols who continued "impure habits," had yielded to Hindu proselytism, had married high-caste Aryans, and had avoided tribal religious habits. As a consequence, "the features of the present tribe of Cheros also approach the Aryan type of the neighbouring Hindu."[120] Crooke's long description of Cheros noted their efforts at ceremonial purity, including restrictions on eating beef and only accepting food cooked in butter if taken from a Brahman's hands. Some were more "Hinduised" than others, and most "mark their approach to Hinduism" through rituals "not usual among the allied Dravidian races."[121] Ultimately, therefore, British and Indian authors joined in creating a Brahmanic evolutionary ethnology that privileged certain physical features and+ religious practices as properly Aryan relative to allegedly non-Aryan tribes.

Significantly, each of these ethnological narratives assumed that the history of racial encounter inherently involved religious change, but only of a certain sort. Each narrative seemed to serve a quest to understand the categorically daunting spectrum extending between Aryans/castes/Hinduism and aborigines/tribes/animism. Excluded—at least in the minds of our authors—were other religious communities, such as Muslims and Christians. Although another spectrum might be proposed to extend between tribals converted and unconverted to Christianity—with many church-going Adivasis still attending to their pre-Christian observances—none of our authors mentioned it. While tribals drew a great deal of attention from missionaries, who often published to a broad audience (notice that the sole non-official among our authors to compile an encyclopedia of tribes and castes was London Missionary Society member Sherring), such categorical challenges tended to prompt more avoidance than investigation, just as the census sidestepped the tricky enumeration of Christian tribals (see chapter 5).

Another complicating factor associated with religion absent in most reports was the arrival of Arabs, Persians, Afghans, and Turks. In contrast with British political, social, or archaeological historiography that would seldom omit "Muslim" invasions, little scholarship on Bihar's purported racial history mentioned the presence of these groups. For instance, in the 1907 manual he devised for the ethnographic survey, Risley repeatedly emphasized the ethnographic survey's focus on castes and tribes, without any acknowledgement of the important *baradari* groups to which many Muslims belonged. He explicitly acknowledged this deliberate oversight when he noted that "the questions are directed in the main to the elucidation of the usages of Hindus and Animists."[122] Overall, therefore, the nine ethnologies considered here demonstrate how religion served as only a secondary analytic metacategory in the discipline of ethnology, which focused primarily on the evolutionary comparison of race along a supposed Hindu/caste-aborigine/tribe spectrum. No clearer evidence demonstrates how the historical narratives Britons developed within different disciplines reflected their own national concerns for the topic of that discipline. While military and political encounters with Muslims had featured into British historical imaginations since the Crusades, they did not figure into the ethnological concerns driving construction of an Aryan racial heritage.

Like other classificatory paradigms, those used by Britons in racial comparisons met with acceptance, accommodation, and resistance from Indians. As we have seen last chapter, these narratives proved influential in Hindu nationalist efforts to categorically claim Adivasis as their own. Meanwhile, other Indians resisted the racism implicit in many racialist conclusions even as they increasingly used ethnology to promote their communities' own status, and to defend it against European claims.[123] For instance, one contributor to the *Calcutta Review*, Syed Mahmood Ali, in 1879 sought to subvert the order often suggested in that other, less commonly told narrative of Aryan invasion: the British conquest of South Asia. He did so by challenging the categorical qualifications (though not the racial categories) upon which the narrative's racist trumphalism depended when he declared "the black-haired and dark-complexioned Indian has won some of the greatest victories of the light-haired and fair-complexioned Saxon."[124] Even among those who resisted British claims, racial categories proved difficult to escape.

## THE ADVENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

"Ethnography, Ethnology, and Anthropometry are all branches of Anthropology, the general science of Man."[125] So concluded Risley in his manual for the ethnographic survey. By the time he wrote this in 1907, Indians and Britons had formalized in both South Asia and the British Isles the discipline of anthropology, which included folklore and ethnological studies. Three decades later, and only seven years before his country's independence, B. S. Guha, reflected on the progress of the discipline from his vantage point as an anthropologist with the Zoological Survey of India. He began by tracing anthropology's history to the *dharmasutra* literature penned by ancient Brahmans, then followed its modern arc from William Jones through Dalton, Ibbetson, Risley, Crooke, before mentioning provincial anthropological studies authored by both Indians and Britons. In order to describe this progress, Gupta narrated a series of firsts, transforming emblems of scientism into milestones of a discipline, and demonstrating the new science's intercultural complexion: the establishment of a laboratory by Nelson Annandale, the foundation of a department in Calcutta University by Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee (1920), the publication of the disciplinary journal *Man in India* (1921), and the creation of the Indian Anthropological Institute led first by J. H. Hutton (1936).[126] Guha's narrative shows how, similar to the development of the cartographic and demographic disciplines, a confluence of government and private, individual and institutional, Indians and Britons established anthropology and endowed it with the symbols of "proper science." It is noteworthy that Guha indigenized the discipline with his argument for ancient Hindu roots even as he promoted this hegemonic scientistic paradigm.

Even when they did not make it the primary focus of their work, anthropologists often interwove religion into their racial and caste studies. This was evident to the end of British rule, when even the underfunded census of 1941 managed a volume on castes that included

a bibliography of tribes. The report—largely drawn from the work of self-trained, Bihari anthropologist Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy (d. 1942) who founded the *Man in India* journal—describes both the Cheros and Kharwars as pre-Dravidians and provides a short list of religious and other social practices, along with references to Buchanan, Cunningham, Dalton, and Risley.[127] While ethnology helped explain (supposedly) the physiology and deportment of Hindu castes and tribes, it also helped account for the divergence of many Hindu practices and ideas from what Sanskrit literature purported. Although they considered the Vedas, Brahmanas, epics, and Puranas too undependable to stand alone as authorities, non-Hindu authors referenced them to provide ancient witness for the ethnological claims they made. Meanwhile, folklore scholars analyzed stories of the present to offer some insight into conditions of the past.

As anthropology became more specialized as a discipline and more recognized as a tool of government, a tension arose both between experiential and disciplinary authority, and between the pursuits of the scholar and the needs of the official. Some scholar-administrators challenged the ability of Europe-bound scholars to deduce conditions in South Asia, preferring the empirical experience of "practical men," like the district officers who locally and directly encountered Indians. Armchair anthropologists in Britain such as James Frazier drew skepticism from men like Risley who doubted they understood, for one thing, "the extraordinary fluidity and mutability of custom."[128] Nevertheless, other government officials lived and worked at a distant remove from Indians and preferred abstract, uncomplicated categories and conclusions on which policy could be established. As Crooke complained in the first edition of *Man in India*, "treatises on tribes and castes have been compiled in various provinces of India . . . under orders of the local governments, not so much in the interests of anthropological research, but as indispensible aids to the work of civil administration. And the wants of the Magistrate and Collector and those of the anthropologist are very different."[129] Like the disciplines that coalesced before it, as anthropology became increasingly established, specialized, and recognized, it generated a stronger limitation on who was recognized as an authority. In 1921, the author of Bihar and Orissa's census report admitted his limited ability to interpret census results in the face of this development when he conceded, "the study has now reached a point at which it has become a specialized branch of science from which further advance must be made in detailed investigations conducted by qualified experts." Like Guha, the report's author points to the publication of anthropological books and a journal in the province, as well as the establishment of a university chair of anthropology as evidence of this disciplinary enrooting.[130] The fact that, despite nearly two centuries of British supervision, foreign depictions of Chainpur became neither more thoroughly sophisticated nor more completely uniform reflects both the narrower range of Europeans who considered themselves qualified to comment and the difficulties of establishing a shared comparative method among those who did.

Despite the divergences in conclusions, Indians and Europeans increasingly believed in a singular, scientific discipline called anthropology. Their success involving so many

Indians in a science that projected a global order for humanity arranged along a developmental narrative was evident in the keynote address of Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit. Presenting to the anthropology section over which he presided at the 1940 Indian Science Congress, he declared "in India every stage of the entire progress of the human race from the humblest beginnings to the greatest spiritual elevation can be studied with greater ease and facility than in any other country." Dikshit not only acknowledges the contributions of biology and geology to anthropological thinking, he also propounds views of earlier British authors who projected various hierarchically arranged steps leading, among other improvements, to "the greatest spiritual elevation" (although it remains unclear what he understands this to connote). However, Dikshit goes beyond the British legacy as he not only nationalizes the discipline and demonstrates pride in India's full range of cultural development, but also urges his compatriots "who are anxious that India should hold her own in every branch of science among the comity of the nations of the earth… Is it too much to expect that the proud possessors of this wonderful heritage will not neglect their patrimony and not leave entirely to others the task of studying themselves their racial composition and age-long culture?" For many Indians at the end of British rule, their nation faced a challenge not only to wrestle the leadership in research on the subcontinent from foreign hands, but also to attain their place in the now-global scientific order. For Dikshit, this task in part requires scientists to complement anthropology with archaeology, the discipline to which we turn in the next chapter.[131]

When the parade was over drove out to the old Muslim mosque—near by—the "Roza" and had a first tea on some old warrior's tomb stone. How this quiet place, with its crumbling walls and trees [*sic*]—an absolute paradise for any artist. Plan to come and camp near here sometime the next cold weather.

—SUB-DIVISIONAL OFFICER GORDON M. RAY, private journal (1940), MSS EUR F256/3. IOIC.

# 7

# Popularizing Chainpur's Past

## ARCHAEOLOGY IN PLACE AND IN MUSEUMS

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DETERIORATING ARCHITECTURE, ROMANTIC valorization of decay, confusing a tomb for a mosque, historical anonymity for the entombed: these were *not* the ideals historians and archaeologists preferred for Chainpur's archaeological relics. Battling time and the elements in an effort to preserve much of what appeared to be imminently doomed to oblivion, Indian and British archaeologists not only required the funding, tools, and materials to collect, represent, and conserve the physical remains of India's past, they increasingly sought to cultivate a public who could participate in a democratic, ocular authority that was very much a hallmark of European Enlightenment thought. Leading an effort that involved learned societies, government, and the public, the Archaeological Survey of India surveyed and classified Chainpur's historical remains before distributing select relics to museums, publishing textual and photographical representations of others, and conserving yet others in place. Overall, these efforts proved an important step in the public persuasion both toward scientism and toward a national, historical metanarrative founded on religious difference. However, as the personal comments of Chainpur's erstwhile sub-divisional officer demonstrates, the results were mixed.

Nevertheless, the decision to broadcast the results of government knowledge projects represented a gradual turn of no small consequence for British India. As previously

mentioned, so jealous was the East India Company of garnered data that it restricted access of even luminaries like James Rennell and Francis Buchanan to their own survey results upon their retirement. Yet by the middle of the next century, the government began to support efforts to share the results of various information projects with the public by establishing institutions dedicated to the popularization of certain forms on knowledge. The founding of the Archaeological Survey of India, the India Museum, and the Patna Museum demonstrates how nongovernmental forces could contribute to the development of institutions of knowledge with an aim of proselytizing Western-originated science, its associated disciplines, and their conclusions both in South Asia and abroad. These institutions all promoted historiographical narratives that helped frame India as a nation and establish its place in the metanarrative of "world history" currently under construction. Due to the perception that Indians had few traditions of recording their own history that worked within Western-originated—and soon dominant—historiographical paradigms, the subcontinent's impressive collection of architectural relics became salient in narrating the past.

## ARCHAEOLOGY'S HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BACKBONE: FRAMING THE MASTER NARRATIVE

> In this district the remains of antiquity are exceedingly numerous, but the traditions on the spot concerning them are very often altogether irreconcilable with appearances or with credibility, and still oftener contradict the few historical hints to be found in Hindu legend, while very often the people have no sort of tradition concerning the antiquities of their vicinity.[1]

Although Francis Buchanan's impression of Shahabad district surpassed this, his unhappy critique of Behar district, this passage indicates how centrally history and historical consciousness figured into his—and many Britons'—depiction of Indians. In many of the accounts for the district surveys he conducted in Bihar, Buchanan's first comments on the people deal with their historical sensibilities. As his comments on Behar indicate, he applied a stern hermeneutic of suspicion to their claims, even as he relied on these to help plumb a district's past. Interpretatively, Buchanan balanced these claims with (a) his empirical experience, (b) the dictates of his logic, (c) oral and written texts, and (d) physical relics. In both his aims and method, Buchanan reflected the centrality of historiography to European intellectual endeavors. The twin effort of determining causal events that explain today's conditions and precisely fixing these events in time was at least as, if not more, important than the endeavor to accurately fix a location for every place. As we have seen in the last chapter, the attempt to establish a metanarrative that traced an arc of change (sometimes progressive, sometimes deteriorative) upon which discrete events or relics could be located informed many of the efforts in

folkloric, linguistic, and ethnological studies, just as it did in geological and biological investigations.

For Buchanan—like other Britons and, increasingly, Indians—the metanarrative of South Asian history relied upon the religious classification not only of Indians, but of time itself. The surveyor's assessment of Behar residents' historical consciousness included the observation that "even the Moslems seem to have abandoned all care of their history." While orientalists earlier had determined that some of the Persian language texts produced in the courts of Muslim Indian rulers bore a resemblance to those produced by the developing European tradition of historiography, they identified few from Hindu sources. Hindu records of the past appeared limited to the puranic and epic narratives commonly dismissed by Europeans as "tales" and "myths." Hence, Buchanan's surprise that no Muslims could offer him the material he sought and his offhand relegation of Hindu materials to "legend," characterized at best as including a "few historical hints." Pursuing the theme of religious causality yet further, Buchanan concluded that Behar district's historical amnesia likely could be ascribed to the Buddhist doctrines once prevalent there. The overall situation led others to conclude coarsely that India, in fact, had no history. However, Buchanan did not consider this the case for Shahabad district, about which he included lengthy deliberations on local narratives that included some specific challenges to, but never wholesale dismissals of, their accuracy. In Chainpur, he recorded several narratives regarding the area.

However, like those Britons who followed him to Chainpur, Buchanan struggled to situate the events and persons that residents described within the historical, all-India metanarrative which he sought to give better shape. While he did not doubt the existence of Sarivahan Raja, as mentioned in the last chapter, neither did he find written evidence that could qualify the claim with direct documentation of the raja's existence or by connecting him to known historical characters. The same pertains to Ahtiyar Khan, whose presence in the massive local mausoleum and purported connection to Sher Shah Suri through marriage is recorded without dissent. On the other hand, Buchanan dismissed "the monstrous legend" of Harshu Pangre because it defied historical causality, as he understood it (i.e., ghosts do not topple rajas). In a similar vein, the surveyor disagreed with the survey's pandit, who claimed that the character Munda, whom he associated with the Mundeswari temple, was a *daitya* (opponent of gods). Buchanan overrode Ramajai Batacharji's veto in favor of the local account that describes Munda as a Chero raja.[2]

It is probably no coincidence that of all the narratives regarding the past that he might have heard in Chainpur, the only ones Buchanan recorded related to specific pieces of architecture. The surveyor relied on Sarivahan's fort, Akhtiyar's tomb, Munda's town of Garohat, and the Mundeswari temple to assess the veracity of certain local narratives. Even the shrine of the dead Brahman whose narrative he dismissed served as historical evidence, since Buchanan judged that its proximity to a Sufi tomb helped prove that it could not have existed during the days of Muslim rulers, who supposedly would not

brook its presence. Although the surveyor sought historical information from local elites, religious figures, and *bhats* (bards and genealogists), the only data he accepted in Chainpur had architectural verification.

Alexander Cunningham echoed Buchanan's sentiments when, before becoming the first director general of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), he concluded that "ancient monuments . . . in the almost total absence of any written history, form the only reliable sources of information as to the early condition of the country."[3] In 1874, thirty-nine London "noblemen and gentlemen" petitioned the government to fund archaeological studies by arguing, "It is, in short in its buildings, and in them only, so far as regards long periods, that the history of India can be satisfactorily read," which would allow an assessment of "her position relatively to the rest of the world."[4] In other words, physical relics—particularly architecture—substituted for the perceived lack of documentary evidence privileged by European historiography.[5] Moreover, this statement reflects how these gentleman-scholars meeting in the offices of the Royal Asiatic Society understood that this history connected the subcontinent's past with a universal history, the metanarrative that simultaneously (a) anchored all other histories and (b) provided grounds for comparison that (c) allowed for judgment regarding India's historical accomplishments relative to other societies.

Later, in 1870, a senior ASI official characterized historical buildings as "a record of *mind* in the past."[6] For many, if not most, British observers, India's "mind" was predominantly religious. Emphasizing the importance of studying South Asia's architecture and its inscriptions, one ASI surveyor reported after his first tour that they demonstrated "the faith, state of civilization and prosperity of the Natives," especially in the period preceding "the Mahomedan invasion."[7] At about the same time, the 1874 petition mentioned earlier made its case by first explaining that the subcontinent's architecture "traced the rise and fall of the different religions which successively prevailed in India." That they next noted architecture's use in mapping ethnological change (and, indeed, conflated biological race with architectural style) reflects the increasing, mutual imbrication of the various disciplines by the late nineteenth century.[8] Three decades later, the viceroy himself gave voice to the enduring inducement to view India's past as predominantly a history of religion and politics. "India is covered with the visible records of vanished dynasties, of forgotten monarchs, or persecuted and sometimes dishonoured creeds," Lord Curzon declared.[9]

The importance of the metanarrative as a historiographical frame locating people, places, and occasions via a set of causal events is reflected in the failure of Chainpur to figure saliently in the historiography of India—or, to wit, even of Bihar. However impressive the collection of edifices in and around the village that had drawn the attention of all the visitors described in previous chapters, archaeologists and historians could not convincingly connect them to the chains of political and religious events that composed contemporary views of Indian history. Even though both Bakhtiyar Khan's mausoleum and the Mundeswari temple had had inscriptions

translated quite early on and the Government of India had declared them protected ancient monuments in 1904, their significance remained limited to how they represented a style of architecture. While clearly a product of the Suri period (1540–1557) given its near-exact resemblance to the Sasaram tomb of Sher Shah's father, the connection of Bakhtiyar Khan to that dynasty remained undocumented and, so, uncertain. Similarly, the Chainpur fort had a gate stylistically datable to the period of Suri or Akbar rule, but this did not garner it much attention in archaeological publications. Although an inscription found nearby suggested that the Mundeswari temple existed by 635–636 C.E.,[10] nothing could be discerned about the reason for or benefactor of its erection.* Finally, Chainpur's Juma (Friday) mosque proved of even less import to archaeologists, despite an inscription that exactly dated it (1668–1669). The surveying officer explained "It is a building of no special interest, but looked upon with great veneration by the Muhammadans of the place, who are either too poor or unwilling to keep it in proper order."[11] Clearly, other factors beyond popular concern and ability to date a building were required to ensure its historiographical notoriety.†

Despite their limited usefulness to historians, Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb and the Mundeswari temple drew the repeated attention of government officers. Their fate at the hands of the ASI and various museums reflects the dynamics by which Britons and Indians practiced archaeology. The uneven beginnings for some of these organizations notwithstanding, they collectively demonstrate how the state established and/or supported institutions for the sake of promoting archaeology and a particular type of historical consciousness. By extension, the state thereby also encouraged the popular appeal of scientism and deepened the sense of India's communal essence. In exploring these results, this chapter endeavors to demonstrate how the knowledge projects influenced by Western-originated science and British religious perspectives came to the attention of so many Indians (and Pakistanis and Bangladeshis). Although by independence, most South Asians had little to no exposure to these projects, the institutions developed by Britons and indigenous elites would rapidly expand, propelled by the ideals of universal education and nationalist spirit. Their success will be apparent in the next chapter in which their presence among twenty-first-century Chainpur residents will be examined.

* As art historian Frederick Asher has noted, some have supposed that the inscription's reference to a temple's construction refers to the Mundeswari temple when, in all likelihood, it refers to an adjacent temple. Asher 1980, 40.

† Although aesthetic interests also impelled many archaeological investigations, they remained rooted deeply in the historiographic paradigm. While certain objects might be collected and/or preserved less for their historical importance than for their aesthetic appeal, proper method dictated that each be located as specifically in history and place as possible.

## THE COMPONENTS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The immediate roots of South Asian archaeology were threefold. The numismatics and epigraphy of orientalists such as William Jones (d. 1794) and James Prinsep (d. 1840) provided one set of origins, while the field surveys of Francis Buchanan (d. 1829) and Colin Mackenzie (d. 1821) a second. These endeavored to interpret historical relics either in situ or, if portable, in the individual's study.[12] Interests in conserving ancient architecture represented the third source. While Britons had practiced "scientific antiquarianism" on their own soil since at least the founding of the Royal Society of London by Charles II in 1660,[13] conservation was not institutionalized there until 1877, roughly the same time as in India.[‡] More basic intellectual components, however, undergirded these origins. Besides the universalistic historiography just described, notions of ocular authority, discovery through uncovering, and protection from disappearance proved critical to the overall concept of archaeology as it evolved.

As Maya Jasanoff has written in her important history of collecting, not only do many museums in Europe trace their origins in part to the collections imperial officials and private travellers created while overseas, but many individuals used their collections—especially of art—as a required tool in cultivating a particular social status. Even before Robert Clive began collecting Indian territories for the East India Company, young elite British men took to the Grand Tour of Europe and purchased paintings, perhaps the first of their personal collections, that would publicize their travels and status.[14] While the Company's orders, not social aspirations, compelled Mackenzie and Buchanan to their field surveys, the empirical impulses of these men ensured both their success and their reputations. Their lives exemplified for their contemporaries and for later generations many of the features that figured prominently in the future discipline of archaeology and were associated with the humanist style of travelogue: activities like mapping, sketching, and collecting. All of these depended on the understanding of ocular authority described in chapter 4.

The ocular authority implicit in both mapping and sketching relied on a double qualification: the traveller or surveyor both had to be "on the spot" and had to accurately *re-present* what she saw so others could view it as well. "Realism" became an important artistic concept as audiences increasingly demanded the ability to distinguish between stylized views of scenes or objects and views of "how it is." The Daniells' Indian images occupy an interesting moment in audience reception given that they had been taken as accurate portrayals of scenes (to the degree that the ASI occasionally referred to them to guide their restoration work) despite their obvious indebtedness to picturesque technique. To accompany his written account of Shahabad, Buchanan and his assistants drafted a district map that corrected Rennell's cartography, drew images of local dress,

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‡ The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) was founded in London in 1877. Ray 2008, 87.

made copies of inscriptions, and sketched many renderings of *murti*s. Following this pattern for his treatment of the Mundeswari temple, Buchanan executed a plan and profile of the temple, as well as a profile of one of the internal pillars. Many travellers took up sketching as a pastime, sometimes using pictures to illustrate their travelogues. So, for instance, two decades after Buchanan's visit to Chainpur, as Emily Eden journeyed from Calcutta to Simla with her brother, the governor general, she recorded making dozens of sketches in her travelogue. The objects of her art included individuals, groups, buildings, and landscapes. Eden's contemporary, Fanny Parks, likewise peppered her travelogue with appreciation for the picturesque and references to her sketching. Making use of newer technology in the early twentieth century, Ramgopal Singh Chowdhari included more than three dozen photographs of architecture and rajas in his *Rambles in Bihar*, although it remains uncertain who actually made the images. In sum, certain techniques of representation (dependent on particular skills, technologies, and points of view) promised to replicate for the reader some of the on-the-spot authority of the traveller and surveyor.[15]

In contrast with pictorial representation, the pastime and profession of collecting expressed a very different manifestation of objectivity and ocular authority. Whereas sketching and mapping required the creation of representations in order to share the once-seen with distant audiences, collecting involved transforming the once-seen into the always-available-to-be-seen. Instead of picturing a thing, it provided the thing for the audience's direct scrutiny (albeit shorn of its original context).[§] For instance, collecting offered an expected complement to Buchanan's written work. As per his instructions for the Bihar and Bengal surveys, Buchanan dispatched geological and botanical samples to Calcutta in addition to his written record, including ninety-three timber samples from one Assamese forest alone.[16] Besides his botanical specimens, Buchanan had collected fish as a personal scientific pursuit since his earliest days in Bengal.[17] He had a local reputation, and kept bazaar fishmongers and other locals on lookout for specimens that would contribute to his collection. So broadly known was his call for specimens that a mendicant brought him a monkey, purportedly native to Rameshura.[18] Collecting served as a favorite preoccupation for many humanist travellers. Even the curmudgeonly Ray maintained a collection of Indian paintings.[19] Nearly a century earlier, Eden nursed a collection, especially of agates, that traveled with her until she reached Simla, where she positioned them around her room.[20] Fanny Parks described "my cabinet of curiosities" that she carried with her while traveling with her husband, a British customs official. Occasionally she even described it as a "museum."[21] Parks's two descriptors unwittingly foreshadowed the arc of collections and ocular authority. The collections of individuals interested in eye-catching fossils, stones, relics, artifacts, and biological specimens often served as the foundation for museums, where their visual presentation

§ Straddling representation and collecting, some archaeologists made casts of architectural components and tin etchings of inscriptions. These offered more than representation based purely on visual observation, but less than the thing itself.

(including their classification, labeling, and arrangement) helped communicate disciplinary knowledge to audiences in Europe, India, and elsewhere. Much of the attraction of museums was their ability to offer visitors insights into the previously buried, now "uncovered" past.

For nineteenth-century Britons, geology represented the paradigmatic science that provided potent metaphors, symbols, and images for feeding contemporary scientism. As partially explored in chapter 6, whether engaged in linguistic, historiographical, folkloric, or ethnological research, many authors wrote of their work using terms such as "uncovering," "unearthing," "digging up," and "bringing to light." Archaeology—which often relied on the use of the shovel, pick, and trowel—helped communicate geological metaphors into the realms of humanist research. Images of ancient relics rescued from the ground not only instilled a fascination for archaeology among some audiences, but they also inculcated a fear of the potential loss of what stood above ground. If ziggurats and stupas—even whole cities—could disappear from view over time, then what about the Taj Mahal or Somnath temple (or, for that matter, the Mundeswari temple or Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb)? The Lyellian and Darwinian revolutions further popularized notions of gradual change that could reduce mountains to molehills, even as it made men out of monkeys.

Indian participation in and contribution to archaeology required more than a familiarization with this emerging discipline; it demanded the cultural inculcation of its intellectual suppositions. The institutionalization of science through museums, education, learned societies, and government surveys served to facilitate this familiarization over the course of British rule because these information projects not only collected data and created knowledge, but also disseminated it among a growing Indian audience. Institutionalized archaeological projects made Chainpur's past available to the public in three ways: representations—textual and pictorial—of relics distributed via publications, relics removed for display, and preservation of relics on site near the village itself. A brief profile of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the Indian Museum, and Patna Museum demonstrates how these institutions sought to promote and protect Chainpur's past even as they instilled archaeological and historiographical paradigms in a coalescing Indian public.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

Standing atop a massif towering 160 meters above the valley floor at the southern edge of the Gangetic Plain, the Mundeswari temple's physical prominence appeared to mimic its archaeological eminence. Despite being buried in its own ruined tower's remains, the evident antiquity of the octagonal structure made it an obvious candidate for not only study, but preservation. Eight kilometers away hulked the heavy yet elegant dome of Bakhtiyar Khan's intimidating *roza* (tomb). Protected by thick sandstone walls, it also would appear

an obvious choice for archaeological consideration. However, the question remained: which of the Chainpur area's many other monumental relics that bore witness to the village's once political centrality would be protected from time? The domed, four-walled simplicity of Daud Khan's tomb surrounded by an intimate courtyard, made famous (albeit incorrectly) by the Thomas and William Daniell painting as an *idgah*? The eight-arched loftiness of a nearby tomb isolated in fields? Or the cryptic *barahdari* ("twelve doors") acting as artificial pinnacle to the bare-sided bulk of a hill overshadowing Bakhtiyar's tomb? Across the subcontinent, in countless cities, towns, and villages, officers and staff repeatedly confronted such dilemmas during the seventy years of the ASI's pre-independence existence. The erratic history of government commitment to the ASI and the equally uncertain path of ASI policy on preservation demonstrates that the British had no enduring, central plan for promoting or protecting India's past, although there was no shortage of Indians and Britons who sought to do both. Despite the centrality of history to British understandings of South Asia and the paucity of acceptable texts documenting the past, no uniform government policies toward archaeological remains existed until the turn of the twentieth century.[22] Nevertheless, the creation of the ASI and its activities in and around Chainpur demonstrate the centrality of religion to Britons' historical vision.

## *The centrality of religion*

The disciplinary divergence of archaeology from historiography that made possible the ASI's establishment offers another example of the escalating specialization of knowledge characteristic of Western-originating science. In contrast with the EIC that dispatched surveyors with an impossibly broad charge of social and natural phenomena to record, the later Government of India established a long line of narrowly defined institutional entities responsible for specialized research: the Botanical Survey in 1890, the Linguistic Survey in 1891, the Ethnographic Survey in 1901, and the Zoological Survey in 1916.[23] Each made manifest the development of a new scientific discipline to which Indian data and labor would contribute. Predating almost all others was the ASI.

Despite its early start, constant government support was not assured for this institutionalization of archaeology. After funding his initial, limited surveys of the early 1860s, the Government of India waited until 1871 to appoint Alexander Cunningham as director general of the ASI, despite efforts by the Royal Asiatic Society of London as early as 1844 to prompt the government to canvass India's major antiquities.[24] The ASI then fell into the purgatory of administrative suspension between 1889 and 1901,[25] although it had already become clear how much more work was necessary just to complete a comprehensive survey of British Indian territory, let alone more detailed investigations. Using the experience of his earlier, preliminary architectural tours, Cunningham had estimated that an all-India survey of all known and unknown archaeological remains would take only ten to twelve years.[26] Four decades later, still engaged in the task, one ASI surveyor

in Bihar commented with considerable understatement, "I found on attempting to visit every wayside shrine, every mosque and every temple in every town and every village, as well as every tomb on every road, and every lonely mound in every jungle, that the programme was a very much larger one than I had realized."[27] Chainpur's monuments had to wait until the 1870s to be investigated by archaeologists. Paralleling zoological, botanical, and ethnological projects, government archaeology sought to account for all of India's architectural relics as part of its endeavor to create a totalizing, objective account of them.

As portrayed in the third theoretical interlude, the Linnaean categorical impulse derived from an Aristotelian notion that only a complete classification of all individuals allowed for an understanding of their relation to one another. This was at the heart of all scientific comparison. Each overlooked class of objects potentially could become a troublesome missing link that made less clear the relation of—and distinction between—other classes of objects. One missing piece of the puzzle threatened not only to leave an incomplete picture, but also to obscure how many of the pieces fit together. As he planned for the first survey, one ASI officer described the difficulties of dating buildings without inscriptions. He explained that only a complete registry of styles that could be properly compared and chronologically organized would do "since this comparison and arrangement are so necessary to the proper understanding of the historical development of art."[28] Linnaeus might have said the same about the classification of animals.

Unfortunately, the classification of architecture proved an unresolved challenge. James Fergusson—one of the progenitors of British archaeology in India, who influenced it even in his Britain-bound retirement—lamented in regard to south Indian relics that "their number is so great, their extent so vast, and their variety so perplexing, that it is extremely difficult to formulate any distinct ideas regarding them." Also in the south, Madras civil servant Robert Sewell hoped that the survey would "create order out of the present chaos."[29] Stymied at the outset of his charge by the absence yet of "hard and fast lines" between architectural styles, Cunningham ordered his subordinates to go with a chronological arrangement: Hindu period and Muhammadan period.[30]

> The architecture of India is naturally divided into the two great classes of Hindu and Muhammadan, which are widely distinct from each other.
>
> The Hindu architecture may be sub-divided into three classes, according to the nature and style of the buildings required by the different religious ceremonies of the Buddhist, the Jain, and the Brahman . . .
>
> The Muhammadan architecture is divisible by style alone; but the difference between Pathan and Mogul architecture is almost as broadly marked as that between the Hindu and Musalman. The majestic beauty of the Kutb Minar, and the stern grandeur of Tughlakabad, are widely different from the chaste elegance of the tomb of Taj-Mahal, and the graceful lightness of Aurangzib's mosque. But as the

> Muhammadan architecture is so varied in character that the broad divisions of Pathan and Mogul are not sufficient to mark the diverse styles which prevailed at particular periods, it may be conveniently divided into five classes.[31]

If the differences between "Pathan" and "Mogul" architecture appeared as varied as that between "Hindu" and "Muslim," why not make them each a major category equivalent to "Hindu" instead of subsuming the two under "Muslim"? Although Cunningham suggested that classification depended upon the divergent religious ceremonies performed by different religious communities, what then to make of a caravanserai in Delhi or the gate to Chainpur's fort which, like the fortress of Tughluqabad, served no explicitly religious purpose? Cunningham's classification clearly depended upon religion as the key to classification, presuming an inherent religious quality to the subcontinent's people—if not all of their sculptures and buildings.

## *Indigenous responses*

The ASI's persistent efforts to involve Indians in both its work and findings helped deepen its intellectual and social impact. At the moment of the survey's inception, the Government of India instructed the newly appointed director general on its preference for native assistants. While allowing for the necessity of one or two European aides, the government ordered Cunningham to train Indians for the work of measuring, surveying, photographing, and directing excavations, while also relying on their superior skills in inscription translation.[32] Sewell, charged with a survey of the south, appealed for help to "a large number of officials and private gentlemen both European and Native," and received it.[33] Meanwhile, although it determined that earlier efforts by amateurs had not been up to snuff (one reason why it created an official establishment), the always-paisa-conscious government also recognized the utility of voluntary private assistance. While this opened opportunities for some locals to participate, disciplinary requirements served as a check on inclusion. Whether professional or private, Indian or European, ASI officials and assistants needed to be disciplined in the skills and approaches required to perform the systematic and scientific projects that the government considered critical for the exploration of India's archaeological heritage. Many Britons distrusted the ability of most Indians to meet these expectations. For instance, while preparing the first all-India survey, one ASI administrator warned that native rulers could not be expected to help identify ancient architecture worthy of attention.[34]

Indigenous responses to archaeological initiatives varied as much as British assurance of their interest and support. In a backhanded compliment, one viceroy doubted an "Asian" inclination to preserve architecture, yet thought Indians more interested in doing so than in building new schools, post offices, or latrines.[35] Despite skepticism of the interest of Indian elites in particular to help, many cooperated.[36] In 1912, the Bihari industrialist Ratan Tata offered a substantial, annual contribution for the archaeological

investigation of a site. A grateful ASI applied it to the excavation of Pataliputra in Patna, and by the next year his 15,000-rupee expenditure was triple the government's funding.[37] Concurrently, the begum of Bhopal patronized the ASI's exploration of Sanchi and paid for the resulting published account.[38] The previous century, her predecessor had also facilitated the excavations there,[39] and then offered an architectural gateway to a British museum in response to a request from the French consul to remove it to his country.[40] However, resistance could flare as well. The owners of most of the prominent Hindu temples in Bhubaneshwar, Orissa, refused the terms extended by the ASI for a deal in which the survey paid for part of the monuments' maintenance in return for certain restrictions meant to help preserve them.[41] In his 1917 travelogue, Ramgopal Singh Chowdhari not once but three times registered his disapproval of efforts by one Bihar district collector to excavate and remove artifacts as an amateur archaeologist. In consonance with his protectiveness of Hindu culture, Chowdhari applauded the success of one locality's residents in blocking his efforts there.[42] A decade earlier, ASI efforts to remove Mughal tiles from a small Hindu shrine and place them in a museum sparked such outrage that Delhi's deputy commissioner ultimately stopped the work.[43]

Although ASI officers could clearly prove insensitive to local sentiment, their practice of archaeology from the start gave attention to local traditions that historians would likely not have considered. Knowledge of vernaculars proved an important qualification for many candidates. As noted in our earlier consideration of folklore collecting, surveyors were expected to record and assess local accounts that could prove so illuminative in the case of edifices with few or no inscriptions or documentation. Just as buried archaeological remains had to be worked out of the ground, so the historical truth had to be sifted from these community narratives. Cunningham would pursue just that endeavor during his visit to Chainpur.

In his report of the 1877–1878 tour that included the tomb, Cunningham noted that "the people's account" about it provided to him by Chainpur inhabitants repeated that given to Buchanan in 1813. That is, the tomb belonged to Ikhtiar Khan whose son married a daughter of Sher Shah. Cunningham added, "but I have not been able to discover anything about either father or son."[44] In other words, he recounted the local story—including the name of the tomb's principle internee—but was unwilling to ascribe factuality to it without corroborating evidence. Clearly for the ASI director general, Chainpur's oral narratives did not represent adequate historical evidence regarding these two men, presumably because they did not satisfy the empirical mandates of proper scientific method. Nevertheless, later ASI reports repeated the narrative of the son marrying into Sher Shah's family and a fairly similar rendition of his name, each based purely on local narrations.** In 1931, Maulvi Muhammad Hamid Kuraishi, officiating superintendent for

** Thomas and William Daniell used various iterations of the name Aktear Khan (1793), Buchanan wrote Ahtiyar Khan (1813), W. W. Hunter noted Ikhtiyar Khan (1877), Cunningham recorded Ikhtiar Khan (1880), T. Bloch established Bakhtiyar Khan (1902), and Kuraishi used Bakhtyar Khan (1931).

the ASI's Central Circle, not only recounted the local narrative in his lengthy description of the *roza*, he also pursued in detail possible connections with historical figures using the Mughal record *Ain-i Akbari* and a Briton's historiography of India.[45] However, Kuraishi's inability to definitively establish these connections doomed the building and Chainpur to the margins of Indian historiography.

### *Issues of re-presentation: conservation and imaging*

As we have seen, government institutions attempted to publicize Chainpur's past using three avenues: representations—textual and pictorial—of relics distributed via publications, relics removed for display, and preservation of relics on site near the village itself. Before we consider the institutional display of relics, it is useful to consider issues of conservation in Chainpur and of the more widespread distribution of representations from there. Initially, when the governor general considered Cunningham's 1861 proposal for a survey, he saw no hope that his or any administration would restore or even protect architectural remains. Instead, he directed his government's attention to "a much cheaper duty" of investigating and recording them.[46] Although some sporadic EIC efforts had sought to preserve Delhi- and Agra-area Mughal architecture in the early part of the century,[47] by 1874 the best the Government of India would do was to prompt local governments to keep an eye on decaying structures so they might encourage their owners to preserve them.[48] While the Indian government began to take conservation more seriously in 1881 with the short-lived appointment of a curator of ancient monuments, its ongoing and underlying expectation was that the survey would ultimately complete its work, disband, and leave conservation to the provinces. Accordingly, for the decade between 1889 and 1899, the government severely pared the ASI's finances. However, as viceroy, Lord Curzon resuscitated and redirected the ASI. He declared to the Asiatic Society in Calcutta soon after his arrival, "There have been persons who thought that, when all the chief monuments were indexed and classified, one might sit with folded arms and allow them slowly and gracefully to crumble into ruin . . . It is in my judgment equally our duty to dig and discover, to classify, reproduce, and describe, to copy and decipher, and to cherish and conserve."[49] When the ASI fully reconstituted in 1901, conservation represented one of its core purposes. This culminated in the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904 by which the government declared certain buildings and objects under its conservational care.

The threat of disappearance drove much of the conservation agenda, just as it did the collecting impulses of the folklore movement. The theme had existed from the ASI's start, when Buchanan warned that some monuments would soon disappear, except in the accurate drawings and precise descriptions of archaeologists.[50] Unwilling to brook tight purse strings on the matter, the group of petitioners in London mentioned above demanded in 1874 that the government address the accelerating destruction of monuments. While the petitioners blamed decay on Indians who did not have the pride

that Europeans would have for the structures[51] (elsewhere, Fergusson and Buchanan separately alleged that zamindars had used monuments at Konarka and Sasaram as quarries), Britons made their own contributions to the decline. Railway engineers willfully turned standing buildings into railway ballast, military authorities who judged Akbar's Agra palace in the Red Fort "unsuited to magazine purposes" contemplated leveling it,[52] and a plan was temporarily floated to destroy the Taj for its marble.[53] Meanwhile, Cunningham's own explorations led to damage at some sites, such as during attempts to retrieve relics at some Buddhist stupas.[54]

Soon enough the Mundeswari temple—in a ruinous state for at least centuries—and Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb—verging on collapse by 1902—would receive interventions.[55] The passage of the 1904 act led to the ASI's protection of both buildings, as well as fifty-nine other monuments in Bihar and Orissa,[56] though none of Chainpur's other four-century-old edifices. By 1914, and costing at least 10,000 rupees, repairs to the temple and mausoleum neared completion. However, nothing could aid their remoteness, and the ASI supervising officer rued that the *roza* was "now practically never seen by anyone, who would admire it."[57] His comment demonstrates that restoration required a certain kind of audience for it to have its preferred effect, and it was not likely to be found in Chainpur. Although the protected structures were intended to have a pedagogical function, the ASI restored Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb and partly rebuilt the Mundeswari temple despite the small audience who would likely struggle to reach them, demonstrating that more than purely instrumentalist motivations prompted their reconstruction. Nevertheless, the tomb's repair had at least some local influence. Kuraishi noted that the name for the tomb used by T. Bloch in his 1902 ASI report "is the one now invariably used by the local people."[58] Although the local narrative he recounted about the interned Khan showed little difference from that told to Buchanan more than a century earlier and later repeated by Cunningham and others, the name altered, perhaps because Chainpur residents aligned their narratives with the ASI's preferred nomenclature, which at some point was posted near the structure's entrance.[††]

At the same time that the ASI sought to actively shape Indian views of the past and protect venerable architecture, various government policies and perspectives at best overlooked and at times undermined indigenous traditions for maintaining artifacts. For instance, except for some minor damage, Buchanan found Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb in fine condition despite the three centuries that had passed since its construction. He noted that the duties of a *mujawir* (attendent) had been secured by five annas a day and eighty *bigah*s of land.[59] This common arrangement of securing rent-free lands as a subsidy for the maintenance of a structure or institution came under British scrutiny, who thought this system encouraged "neglect and sloth" and rued that it protected productive lands from government revenue assessment. The precipitous decline of the *roza* in the succeeding century that left it nearing ruin might have resulted from aggressive British efforts to

[††] As we shall see in the next chapter, current usage has split between Bakhtiyar Khan and Bhaktiyar Khilji.

resume revenue extraction from such lands in the early nineteenth century,[60] a process that a prominent British official faulted for the decline in indigenous schools.[61] By 1917 at the latest, the *mujawir* position had almost certainly lapsed as the ASI pondered the appointment of a watchman for the site.[62] British allegations that Indians had no regard for maintaining their ancient architecture overlooked both the mechanisms that did exactly this and British involvement in their dissolution.

Britons often ignored preexisting efforts to remember the past because they did not fit the scientistic requirements of historiography. Archaeologists and historiographers differentiated themselves from local narrators of the past—such as bards, *bhat*s, and poets—in their trust in a supposedly objective and universal method. Reliance on written and material evidence to create a totalizing picture of the past made oral accounts seemingly suspicious, highly individualistic, susceptible to change, and, therefore, often categorically dismissed as local tales or folklore. Clearly outside this historiographical paradigm, the narrative cycle regarding the unjust raja and his slighted Brahman vizier nevertheless evinces in its persistence and consistency the enduring investment at least some village residents made to methodically remember the events associated with the two. As described in the previous chapter, over a period of more than a century, Buchanan, Cunningham, Bloch, William Bowley, Chandrasekhara Banurji, Khairat Ali, and Chandra Kumar Mathur each repeated an iteration of the cycle given firsthand to either him or his assistant. Despite differences in details like names (Buchanan mentions Sarivahan Raja and Harshu Pangre, while Mathur notes Raja Salivahana and Harshu Brahm), the various versions remain constant in their narrative of the raja robbing his advisor of property (usually his house, sometimes lands) at the behest of his wife (a co-wife sometimes figures in), which leads the Brahman to commit *dharna* (a death fast), become a *brahm*, and destroy the raja (and sometimes his family, although a daughter is often said to have survived).[63]

Although it is impossible to know whether or not residents' notions of the past bore a resemblance to the historicity that characterizes them now, their persistent maintenance of the narrative demonstrates that at least some residents drew a powerful connection between past events and local sites. To wit, the fact that two of the seven authors mentioned above collected the narratives while in pursuit of information about architecture demonstrates how the raja's ruined fort, the *brahm*'s shrine atop it, and the Brahman's demolished house all featured prominently in the oral narratives and served as empirical evidence to these narrative's claims. Although discounted by British historians for lack of documentary evidence, the deliberateness in maintaining this social memory and persistent connection to specific architecture nevertheless demonstrated a commitment to knowing the past, just not one that fit historiographical and archaeological expectations. The British and later Indian historians provided Chainpur residents with alternative narratives of their past which, while not entirely occluding the previous ones, established competition for them.

Over time, ASI officials increasingly sought to cultivate an historical consciousness among Indians in order to create the readers, viewers, and visitors who would endeavor to

learn about and visit places even as remote as the Chainpur sites. However, the organization's initial volumes hardly represented best-selling travelogues. At the end of the century, none of the major booksellers in India sought to carry the volumes, while only one in Britain offered to sell surplus copies. Nevertheless, the government published more than two hundred of the volume in which Chainpur first gained mention.[64] High government officials meanwhile debated what "the scientific public" wanted and the merits of slimming the volumes.[65] When he became director general in the first years of the twentieth century and in light of the failure of previous publications to do so, J. H. Marshall sought to stimulate both public and official interest by instituting a more accessible series of annual reports—a move that the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* already had called on the government to do.[66] Although few in the public were likely to purchase these reports, they might read them in the public institutions increasingly established by government and private individuals in the late nineteenth century. For instance, the 1905–1906 ASI report for eastern India alone was sent to two learned societies, five libraries, seven museums, and eighteen universities[67] in India.[‡‡] A decade later, the archaeological survey was routinely providing this and each of its newly published reports to six learned societies, nineteen public libraries, sixteen museums, and eighty-seven schools, colleges, and universities throughout India.[68] Despite the global depression, by 1938, efforts to excite more interest in archaeology among "the travelling public" (as Director General K. N. Dikshit put it), led to new promotional techniques. These included descriptive signs hung near certain monuments, stone directional signs pointing travellers to neighborhood sites, pictures of monuments mounted in railroad cars and stations, "magic lantern" shows on site and in gatherings elsewhere, and publications and picture postcards made available for purchase.[69] Whereas publishing efforts could appeal to only the slim minority of literate elites, audiences did not need to be literate to appreciate a photograph.

From the start, ASI officials recognized the ease of distribution as one of the advantages of photography, especially in their goal of showing Indians their own history. After his first tour, one surveyor in 1870 recommended sending the resulting photos with accompanying vernacular notes to museums, colleges, and schools of art for exhibition.[70] Following an initial photographic study a year earlier by survey pandit Babu P. C. Mukherji, the ASI arranged for additional photographs of Bakhtiyar Khan's *roza* and the Mundeswari *mandir* just as they both came under state protection in 1904.[71] More were published a decade later.[72] Each of the ASI's photos framed the respective building without the presence of people, suggesting that the architecture was knowable on its own terms as an object apart from human habitation. As opposed to Thomas and William Daniells' images that pictured the interaction of monument, inhabitants, and environment to satisfy expectations for picturesque imagery (see Illustration 7.1), the ASI pictures

[‡‡] In comparison, the ASI dispatched the same report to eight learned societies, four libraries, two museums, and eleven universities in the United Kingdom. Bloch 1907, 18–20.

ILLUSTRATION 7.1. Thomas and William Daniell, "Tomb of Akbar Khan, Chaynpore, Brother of Sher Shah, 23 January 1790." © Victoria Memorial Hall library.

isolated the thing to the thing itself, sometimes with some sense of physical environment (see Illustration 7.2). In these photographs, the buildings existed only as relics of the era of their construction, not as part of a current cultural landscape. As one observer stated in 1864, photography functioned "to remove from the paths of science . . . the impediments of space and of time, and to bring the intellects of civilized lands to bear upon the phenomena of the vast portion of the earth whose civilization has either not begun, or is passing away."[73] Indeed, while the urge to protection often prompted the removal of the relic from its current human landscape and restricting the types of interaction allowed with it, conservation removed the relic from the consequences of temporality by "repairing the damage of time."

The perception of this dual ability to isolate the edifice in time and represent it nonrelationally made photography a powerful tool for inducing a notion of objective truth. Indeed, the lack of human presence extended beyond the frame of the image. While the romantic images of the Daniells—however "accurate" in their portrayal of architecture—followed picturesque conventions that contemporary audiences understood, photography was viewed by at least its Western audiences as being without any obvious subjective influence. Although audiences anticipated that the Daniells' painting of the Mundeswari temple would stir their sentiments (see Illustration 7.3), many viewers approached Mukherji's photos expecting that they would suspend their subjectivity in the same manner they thought the photographer had (see Illustration 7.4). While audiences might

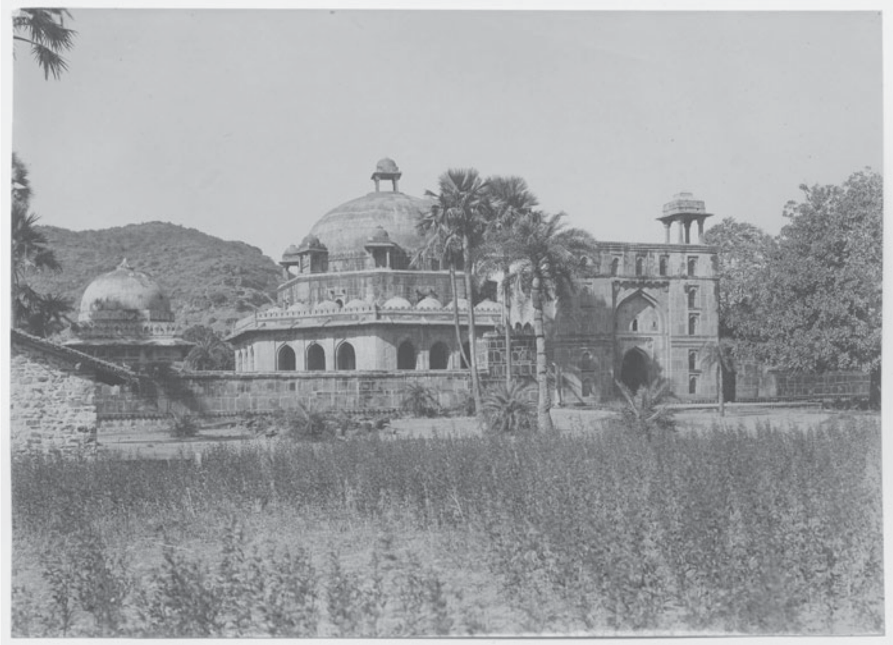

ILLUSTRATION 7.2. "Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb, Chainpur," from Maulvi Muhammad Hamid Kuraishi, *List of Ancient Monuments Protected Under Act VII of 1904 in the Province of Bihar and Orissa*. 1931. © Archaeological Survey of India.

ILLUSTRATION 7.3. Thomas and William Daniell, "The Temple of Mandéswara near Chaynpore, Bahar." 1808. Ames Library of South Asia, University of Minnesota.

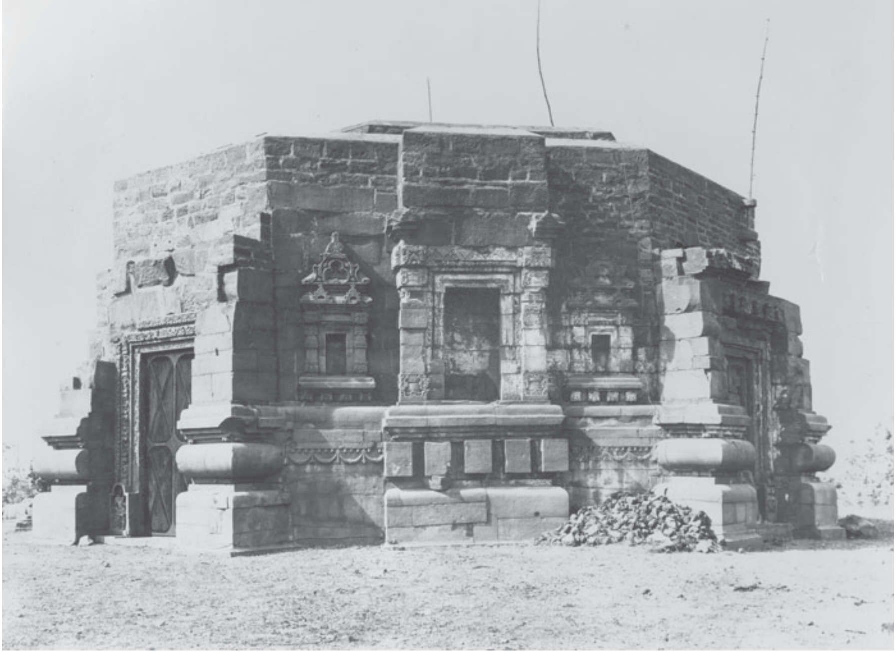

ILLUSTRATION 7.4. "Mundeshwari Temple from south west," Shahabad. *Bihar and Orissa*, Volume 9. 1932–1933. © Archaeological Survey of India.

"see" the artists' brush strokes in a painting, they tended not to want to recognize the photographer's choices in perspective, distance, and framing. Because scientism values, perhaps above all, the description of individual items as discrete, definitively bounded objects, the camera seemed the preeminent technology of representation.

J. Forbes Watson of the Indian Museum summarized prevailing opinion when, in 1870, he wrote that "[i]t is scarcely necessary to refer to the vast importance of photography as a means of affording a *truthful* delineation of structures of every description, and of imparting an *accurate* impression of their architectural features" [my emphasis]. Few needed convincing. Photographs played a widening role in the British project to present India to itself, because the country "should be made extensively acquainted with her own works of art. In no way can this be so readily accomplished as by showing her faithful representations of these, and for this purpose photography is an agent of unequalled power."[74] However, like many British-initiated knowledge projects, the advantages of photography did not always outweigh the government's cost-consciousness. Only readily available amateur photographers were enlisted at first, including travellers[75] and even a local chaplain.[76] Gradually, the economy of photography proved itself; photos could be reproduced to no end, and appeared in museums, exhibitions, and published materials. Also, "magic lantern" projection shows were used both by museums to draw audiences to their halls and, as already mentioned, by the ASI to promote tourism for its sites.[77]

Photographs of Indian architecture graced not only the ASI's publications distributed overseas (by 1914, the ASI made a practice of dispatching its reports to 148 foreign universities, societies, libraries, newspapers, and magazines),[78] but also international exhibitions. These world fairs offered an important opportunity for imperial powers not only to demonstrate the raw materials and manufactured products of their overseas possessions, but also to inform fellow Europeans about the cultures there. During the Great Exhibition of 1851, the East India Company devoted thirty thousand square feet of the Crystal Palace to the display of Indian articles.[79] Photographs represented a small but important part of these exhibits. So, for instance, in 1867, Fergusson published five hundred architectural photos in a catalogue for the Paris Exhibition.[80] A few years later, the Government of India had ordered local governments to contribute samples[81] to a "large collection of Photographs representing the different Tribes of India" that went on display at the London Exhibit of 1862, demonstrating the utility of photography to ethnology as well.[82] Meanwhile, the exhibit became a moment to appreciate the domestic impact of photography as well. Not only did at least one prominent Indian contribute to the collection, but the paintings prepared by select Delhi artists as their contribution to the exhibit reflected new styles of shading and perspective apparently borrowed from currently circulating photographs of Delhi and Lahore scenes.[83] The accelerating changes in technologies of representation not only appeared to improve the capacity for scientistic realism, but also increased the audience for viewing the representations provided by British-established institutions. Like the material artifacts that they complemented at the exhibitions, photographs seemed to imbue the audience with ocular authority because of their apparently unmediated view of authentic Indian objects.

In sum, the work of the Archaeological Survey of India only gradually gained popularity. Nevertheless, the centrality of religion to its classifications of architectural styles, historical states, and Indian history helped reaffirm assertions of religion's prominence in South Asian societies. Simultaneously, British exertions to depict Chainpur's artifacts using the frames of historiographical narrative and objective pictorial representations challenged and influenced, if not displaced, many local practices of remembering and depicting. Meanwhile, British and, increasingly, Indian archaeological endeavors gradually developed museums as places for both the institutionalization of collecting and the creation of a scientifically inclined public.

## THE INDIAN MUSEUM AND THE PATNA MUSEUM

By publishing textual and photographical representations of Bakhtiyar Khan's mausoleum and the Mundeswari temple while conserving them where they stood, the Archaeological Survey of India pursued two of the three strategies identified above for learning and teaching about Chainpur's past. The ASI undertook the final strategy when it removed a two-piece inscription from the Mundeswari temple and sent it for display in

Calcutta's Indian Museum.[84] This museum, like the Patna Museum and the many others founded on the subcontinent over the course of British rule, resulted from efforts to collect, display, and interpret natural and human items for both a foreign and indigenous audience. This represented a turn of no small consequence for government knowledge projects in British India. While still guarding many of the results from its information projects in the middle of the nineteenth century, the government sought to popularize particular disciplines and Western-originated science in general by establishing or supporting institutions of knowledge. As the examples of the India Museum and Patna Museum show, both Indian and British learned societies often collaborated with the Government of India in an effort to educate publics both on the subcontinent and abroad. "A museum should, in fact, be not merely a repository of the nation's art or natural history treasures or archæological wealth," opined one Indian author, "but it should constitute what has been aptly termed a 'University for the masses.'"[85]

Of course, the notion of a university for rural inhabitants like Chainpur's residents beckoned beyond the fantastic given the contemporary limitations on the most rudimentary formal learning. Although information on the village's formal learning opportunities is scarce, Buchanan provides a vague picture from his 1812-1813 survey. Of the two dozen pandits teaching in Sanskrit whom he found in the district, none lived in Chainpur. Although Buchanan did not indicate where in Shahabad he encountered teachers besides pandits, few educators in Persian (*miyanji*s) and Hindi/Bhojpuri (gurus), and none in Arabic medium (maulvis)[86] lived in the *thana* (police district) where Chainpur was located. Indeed it was home to just eighteen of the district's 431 reported teachers.[§§] The surveyor found that students who received an education (from five to thirty per teacher or school) tended to study for four years. Persian education was limited to the ability to maintain accounts and write letters. Even so, Buchanan concluded that only half of landowners could read in any language.[***] Moreover, he observed that Hindu women were disallowed from learning to read or write, skills that might invite "divine wrath" if obtained. He determined that the district's pandits and maulvis taught "sciences," which included grammar, astrology, and medicine; but he remained underwhelmed by the overall condition of indigenous science in both Bihar and Bengal.[87] By the mid-nineteenth century—as the British Indian government warmed to the idea of universal education—Chainpur likely had a Persian-language *maktab* (elementary school) or Hindi school, given that most of the region's other villages did. But it did not have a vernacular

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§§ In Mohaniya *thana*, Buchanan counted four of Shahabad's twenty-five pandits, two of eighty-six *miyanji*s, twelve of 335 gurus, and none of the district's three maulvis. Eleven *thana*s comprised Shahabad. Some of these teachers taught in the homes of their patrons, not in established schools.

*** Given our contemporary ideals of universal education and literacy, these facts threaten to look rather wan. But as C. A. Bayly points out, north Indian societies held no such expectations, relying instead on a literacy awareness in which even the poorest had access to those who were literate. He estimates that in early nineteenth century north India, twenty percent of urban males and five percent of rural males enjoyed a basic literacy. The percentages for women would have been substantially lower. See Bayly 1996, 36–37, 39.

middle school until 1870 and an English middle school until 1937.[88] The government established a secondary school in Bhabua in 1920 to which some of Chainpur's older children walked.[89] In keeping with a 1939 report that members of the public in Shahabad district vied with one another to establish schools,[90] zamindar Ram Karan Singh helped establish Chainpur's high school after independence.[91]

Given the state of education in villages like Chainpur, the idea of museums being "universities of the masses" seems optimistic at best. Yet, their promise to draw and impress crowds seemed fulfilled in at least some instances. In celebration of one of these successes, *The Calcutta Review* in 1866 reflected on the import of the Asiatic Society's role in founding the Indian Museum in Calcutta. "Had it . . . done nothing else to promote science during the past ten years, it would have entitled itself to the gratitude of posterity for the vigour with which it has prosecuted to success a project (for the foundation of a Museum) fraught with so much public usefulness."[92] Significant for our purposes, the *Review*'s panegyric identified three of the four elements that made the India Museum—and other public displays of knowledge—possible: the role of a learned society, the ideal of promoting science, and the idealization of a public who will benefit from the museum. Only the role of the government was overlooked.

As we have seen in this and earlier chapters, learned societies—both in Europe and South Asia—played an essential role in prompting the government of British India to initiate a number of information projects. The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge pushed for the establishment of the ASI, the Asiatic Society of Bengal (ASB) urged the foundation of the Linguistic Survey, and the British Association for the Advancement of Science promoted the Ethnographic Survey. The Royal Society, founded in 1660, provided the model for such learned societies as privately developed institutions that facilitated the scientific activities of its members and promoted the cause of science. Not incidentally, the society obtained a royal charter two years after its establishment, thus ensuring patronage and influence.

William Jones spearheaded a South Asian version of the Royal Society in the form of the ASB, which first met in 1784. The society's original resolution stated its goal was "enquiry into the history and antiquities, arts, sciences, and literature of Asia," sweeping both the natural and human worlds into its purview. The initial resolution made no mention of promoting members' findings to an Indian public. Indeed, Jones left as an open question whether or not Indians would even be allowed to join[93] (and none were until 1829).[94] The society's initial membership included EIC servants driven by their private interests in mathematics, medicine, history, music, and poetry, among other topics. However, the public promotion of art and scientific knowledge clearly propelled the Asiatic Society's decision in 1814 to found its own museum in Calcutta. Many of its displays came from the personal collections of the society's members. Indians such as Rajendra Mallick, Begum Samroo, and Kalikissen Bahadur participated as contributors. But the museum's supporters desired that their institution appeal to more than scholars, and their success can be measured by the number of guests who frequented the exhibits.

In 1864 alone, more than one hundred thousand Indians and "others" had visited, relative to about thirty-five hundred Europeans.[95]

The East India Company turned to using museums to promote scientific interest when the Geological Survey of India made their collections public. These included nearly ten thousand fossils, mineral samples, and ore specimens. Within a year of its opening in 1840, museum attendance rose by more than half. Since libraries offered another venue for the public promotion of knowledge, the museum included one as well. In exchange for the Geological Survey's own publications, various European and American learned societies dispatched their periodicals to line the new library's shelves. Foreign exchanges went beyond publications. From Britain alone, the Museum of Geology received donations for display from the British Museum, the Royal College of Surgeons, the Geological Survey of Great Britain, and the Geological Society, London. The benefits of imperialism were apparent in the range of the dispatched items, with some originating from British domains as disparate as Northern Ireland and New Zealand.[96]

Despite its appreciation for this initiative and the other contributions of the Asiatic Society, the government cautiously measured its support for the society's struggling museum even as members appealed to ideals of enlightened governance that valued educated subjects. Fighting to meet the financial demands of maintaining their museum, the society requested government support in 1836.[97] Twenty-one years later, the society went much further and offered to make over the entirety of its collections (except the library) if the government used it as the foundation for an "Imperial Museum" in Calcutta, British India's capital. Initially, the government resisted the costly proposal.[98] In its long exchange of correspondence negotiating with the government, the society appealed to a new state policy of popular, educational improvement. As the society's secretary, W. S. Atkinson, put it in a letter to the Home Department in 1859, "The Council further have come to express the high sense they entertain of the liberal and enlightened arrangements which have recently been adopted for the extension of education and the general advancement of knowledge in this country; and speaking in the name of the oldest of the Literary and Scientific bodies in the East, they feel that they beg to be heard on what they deem a most important element in all such arrangements, the foundation of a Public Museum on a comprehensive basis." Significantly, Atkinson equated improvement with science and considered that the government in India should be as responsible for its patronage as the government in England demonstrated itself to be.[99] Such exhortations apparently had their intended effect, and the government relented in 1862, relieved the Asiatic Society of its costly collections, and committed itself to establish "The India Museum" (a name resisted by the society). The museum first opened its doors in 1875. Despite the aforementioned contributions of Indians to the collections, the initial set of museum trustees included none.[100]

Besides its efforts to promote a popular empiricism, the Indian Museum reflected another scientistic quality: disciplinary specialization. As art historian Tapati Guha-Thakurta demonstrates, it projected the mid-century emergence of archaeology as an organized

form of knowledge that took its place alongside natural history and decorative arts in the museum's collections. This change echoed the specialization of collections in mid-nineteenth-century Europe from the composite collections found in curio cabinets that haphazardly combined art, antiquities, and natural history to those that became systematically arranged.[101] This helped inform audiences—Indian and British alike—of the new discipline's coalescence, conclusions, and authority.

While many officials despaired that Indians often viewed museums as only entertaining *ajaib ghar* or "wonder houses" that fascinated without informing,[102] others joined Rudyard Kipling in trusting that the museums nevertheless communicated scientistic values to their visitors. In the novel whose title bears his name, the fictional Kim berates his identifiably Muslim playmate's fearful awe of the Lahore Museum as he leads a visiting lama into "the Government's house." The sahib in charge, Kim tells the lama in an effort to imbue him with trust in the official, attempts "to gather knowledge," even as he oversees the building's collection of relics, images, and books. In the mind of Kipling, whose father once curated the Lahore Museum (f. 1864), effecting wonder did not undermine the museum's mission but rather promoted and vindicated it. The traveling Tibetan Buddhist's awe at this *ajaib ghar*'s collection arises not from its amusement value, but from his recognition of his religion's central narrative of the Buddha's life within it: "Incident by incident in the beautiful story he identified on the blurred stone, puzzled here and there by the unfamiliar Greek convention, but delighted as a child at each new trove. Where the sequence failed, as in the Annunciation, the curator supplied it from his mound of books—French and German, with photographs and reproductions."[103] Kipling here mirrors the ambitions of Cunningham, described earlier, to use archaeology to promote views of India that Indians already know yet from which they can learn more.

Not all Britons shared Kipling's optimism, and their criticism reflects the scientistic sensibility that informed their expectations for going to a museum. Some did not perceive among Indian visitors the "proper" engagement with museum order to which they had been disciplined. In one instance, American travel writer Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore tempered her praise for the sixty thousand monthly visitors to Calcutta's India Museum when she declared "but the company of bare-footed, sheeted Bengalis are so aimless and vacant-looking that one questions whether the carefully planned exhibits reach beyond the retina, whether they have comprehension of the objects."[104] At the other end of the subcontinent, Edgar Thurston, superintendent of the Madras museum, noted, "I am myself repeatedly amused by seeing visitors to the Madras museum pass hurriedly and silently through the arranged galleries, and linger long and noisily over a heterogeneous collection of native figures, toys, painted models of fruits, &c." In opposition to these "sight-seers," those who want to learn—in his opinion—appreciate museums where "collections were brought together and properly exhibited, illustrating and forming a classified index to the natural history, ethnology, arts, archæology, economic resources, &c. of the province concerned."[105] From his official position, Thurston identified the core elements required for the order he

intended to instantiate: classification, scholarly disciplines, and the visitor's disciplined engagement with both the exhibits and their objects.

Despite such skepticism about Indian behavior in museums, the Bengal government developed policies for promoting the display of informative objects in the upper provinces of its sprawling territories. In 1866, the chief commissioner declared that every district in the North-Western Provinces would have a small economic museum built that would house exemplary specimens of local products and samples of English agricultural machinery.[106] The "museum movement" accelerated following Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1887 and redoubled early in the next century.[107] Some of those proposing museums intended them to promote Indian designs as a strategy for blunting what they viewed as an endemic mimicry of European patterns that they judged to be of poorer quality than the Indian forms being displaced.

Meanwhile, the British Indian government arranged for antiquarian relics and commercial products to be lent or given to various institutions abroad in order to bolster the country's international profile. These complemented the survey reports and scientific findings it dispatched to foreign universities, learned societies, and government institutions, as noted above. Hence, the British Museum received many Indian archaeological specimens, despite Cunningham's bitter complaints that too many of them languished unseen in storage.[108] (Sharing this sentiment, soon after becoming viceroy, Lord Curzon opposed the dispatch of an important archaeological collection to London.)[109] Meanwhile, the various international exhibitions currently in vogue offered opportunities that both private merchants and government officials hesitated to miss, and they worked together to some degree in the effort to assemble the most advantageous displays. For instance, the members of the Central Committee for the Collection of Works of Art and Industry for Bengal had to justify their choice of items for the London Exhibit of 1862 for the province's lieutenant governor. Because objects had also been dispatched for similar exhibitions in 1851 and 1855, the committee chose manufactured items that demonstrated either their improved quality or their decreased cost, as well as materials that would attract development of India's natural resources.[110] E. G. Bingham, a British indigo cultivator and honorary magistrate in Chainpur, made particularly important labors to both collect specimens and provide information on mineral resources.[111]

Government concern to highlight India's scientific contributions informed its involvement in gathering materials for the 1862 exhibit, as did its commercial interests. The superintendent of the Geological Survey of India (GSI) complained to the Home Department, "I am under the impression that the mineral wealth and the valuable paleontological collections which India affords, were not ever fairly represented in 1851, and it would be desirable to avoid this on the coming opportunity."[112] The department replied by instructing him to create a collection based on "your branch of science," apparently endorsing the inclusion of items that could be of only scientific interest.[113] This exchange evidences both the investment of at least some government servants in the promotion

of India's contributions to knowledge and an evolving disciplinarity invested in this particular "branch." The very focused set of concerns that the government gave the GSI upon its founding in 1851 demonstrates both the emergence of geology as a disciplined form of knowledge and the government's instantiation of the discipline through a state-run institution. The GSI's involvement in the London Exhibit reflects the government's explicit investment in projecting scientific knowledge to foreign publics in a manner that accompanied its work with domestic ones.

In the region around Chainpur, individual Indians complemented both these state and private, urban institutions with their own organizations for the promotion of public knowledge. In 1891, Khan Bahadur Khuda Bakhsh opened the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna, based on his collection of four thousand manuscripts.[114] The founder's father—concerned with the impact of Macaulay's Minute and the promotion of English education—purportedly made a deathbed wish that his own acquisitions form the basis for a collection of "Oriental learning." The provincial government was made one of the library's trustees.[115] Closer to Chainpur, L. Sri Devakumar Jain established the Sri Dev Kumar Jain Oriental Research Institute in Arrah in 1903. Initially intended as a safeguard for Jain manuscripts he found decaying elsewhere in the subcontinent, the institute added a library in 1926 to house a wide range of materials meant for public access.[116] Meanwhile, by 1909 the Raja of Dumraon had established the first museum in Shahabad district. Complementing his experimental teaching farm, the economic museum displayed grain specimens from across India, agricultural equipment, and various products.[117]

Although the government may have encouraged local initiatives to establish institutions, it nevertheless worried about the information these disseminated to the public and whose political agenda this might serve. By 1919, as the nationalist efforts of the Non-Cooperation Movement intensified, government concern began to grow in Bihar regarding the interests motivating political organizations that were creating reading rooms and libraries. A special agent of the Political Department reported that these groups established facilities to spread "their special propaganda" and that they "do much mischief and require to be brought under effective and stringent control." Recognizing that the source of the threat could equally serve as a vehicle of state promotion, he recommended that consideration be given to how libraries and reading rooms run by district and municipal boards, as well as schools and colleges, "may constitute a valuable means of furthering loyal and patriotic propaganda."[118]

By this time, the government had split Bihar and Orissa from Bengal (1912) to become their own province, leading some Biharis to demand that the provincial government establish a museum marking their independent status. This expectation amply testifies how increasingly Biharis (among other South Asians) viewed institutions of knowledge both as signifiers of regional identity and as part of the government's responsibility to the public. Although a century had passed since the founding of the India Museum through the combined efforts of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (ASB) and the govern-

ment, a similar alliance of learned society and government combined to create the Patna Museum in Bihar. The difference in the two histories of the two museums mirror the divergences between the two organizations that helped found them while demonstrating the arc of scientism's success in gradually becoming more prevalent among Indians.

At the inaugural meeting of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society (BORS) in 1915, member Sachchhidananda Sinha first proposed that a museum be established. The idea found a champion in Edward Gait, Bengal's census superintendent, who had prompted the initial gathering of the society. He would remain a leading member of the BORS through to independence in 1947. Of the thirty present for this meeting, more than half were Indian. Both Indian and British members offered their personal collections of ethnographic objects for the intended museum.[119] The society published original scholarship, including that of K. P. Jayaswal, whom Gait praised for "rapidly acquiring a European reputation." As editor of the society's journal, Jayaswal oversaw its distribution to other learned societies around the globe. Among the members of the BORS, a number carried qualifications from scientific disciplines. For instance, one of the museum's curators, Rai Sahib Manoranjan Ghosh, had trained under John Marshall while working in the Archaeological Survey of India.[120] In contrast, the original roster of ASB members listed no Indian names,[121] and William Jones's "Discourse on the Institution of a Society" demonstrated anything but a disciplinary focus. Although both societies defined their fields of interest geographically—Asia, and Bihar and Orissa—from the start BORS limited its disciplinary agenda to history, philology, archaeology and numismatics, and anthropology and folklore.[122] Jones, on the other hand, declared that the ASB's subject of investigation was "MAN and NATURE; whatever is performed by the one, or produced by the other." This encompassed history, science, and art.[123] The difference between the foci of the two learned societies mirrors how Western-originated science introduced sharpening specializations during the century intervening between the establishment of each. Meanwhile, the Asiatic Society did not escape the clarion call to specialization. In 1829, it established a new journal dedicated only to Asia's natural world, *Gleanings in Science*, in order to address the increasingly particular interests of some readers in natural sciences who differentiated themselves from those concerned with religious, linguistic, and cultural matters.[124]

The evolution of the Patna Museum reflects how this specialized knowledge increasingly served Indian (and Bihari) concerns for pride, self-knowledge, and self-identification. Gait recognized this—and the anti-Bengali sentiments of many Biharis that accompanied the province's independence—when he declared in the BORS inaugural meeting that a research society should join the other institutions planned for the newfound province: its own government, high court, and university.[125] Clearly a museum fit the pattern, especially if others shared the resentment of the president of the BORS Managing Committee who lamented how "every object of this province was exiled to the Indian Museum at Calcutta." Thus motivated, the society approached the provincial government,

which arranged continued funding for a collection of Bihari antiquities in the Patna commissioner's bungalow. Prominent ethnologist and anthropologist Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy served as curator. C. S. Fox of the Geological Survey of India arranged the section of his specialty. However, these arrangements failed to entirely satisfy the society, so it pushed for a purpose built museum even after the collection later moved to a space in the Patna High Court. Ultimately the society prevailed and the new building opened in 1929, replete with offices for its members.[126]

At the museum's dedication ceremony, the province's British governor recognized both the universalism of historiography and the particularism of Biharis' pride in their past when he declared that the province's past "is a common platform on which all races can meet," yet "we cannot be content to be merely a section of the Calcutta Museum or any other museum." Notably voicing an inclusivity with those native to Bihar, he continued, "We must have our own Museum, not merely to house objects of archæological interest, but as an outward and visible sign that we have a past, and that it belongs to us."[127] This proud, proprietary sentiment echoed Gait's second presidential address to BORS twelve years earlier, when he regretted that Bengalis had written the bulk of journal contributions, but hoped that Biharis would offer more in the future.[128] Altogether, then, the Patna Museum resulted from the efforts of both Indian and British agents, in both government and a learned society. Like its patron society, the museum manifested key elements of the new science-bound epistemic order: increasing specialization, disciplinary authority, and global networks. Moreover, the museum's mere existence symbolically expressed Bihari independence from Bengal, while its scientistic displays manifested a Bihari particularity that served as one basis for Bihari pride.

Ultimately, the urge both to create museums and libraries in Bihar and Bengal and to participate in international exchanges and exhibits demonstrated the intimate interaction between a range of actors. Government administrators, government departments, learned societies (in India and abroad), and private individuals (British and Indian)—through a complex interaction informed by a range of interests—founded and engaged with institutions dedicated to communicate information about the human and natural worlds. As the nineteenth century wore on, an appeal to the promotion of science to justify these institutions' costs was increasingly assumed to be an absolute good among not only Britons but increasing numbers of Indians as well. The widening acceptance of this view by Indians can be ascribed, in part, to the impact of scientistic values espoused in museums, libraries, and exhibits. However, the degree of success for each of these projects—as Tapati Guha-Thakurta points out in regard to museums[129]—almost entirely depended upon a "properly" educated public. While English education found slow but gathering enthusiasm as the nineteenth century came to its end, the government increasingly supported vernacular education in an effort to create a public receptive to scientism and the other values promoted by institutional knowledge projects, as we shall see in the next chapter.

### CONCLUSION

> For the lord Mandalesvara provision has been made every day, as long as the Sun and Moon last, everlastingly, to provide two *prastha*s of rice for the votive offering and a *pala* of oil for the lamp from the treasury.[130]

In the odd calculus of empire, the British government made its own provision for the Lord Mandalesvara, whose temple is perhaps the same as the one now known as Mundeswari, near which a seventh-century inscription—of which this is a part—was found. The archaeological initiatives supported by the government demonstrated again the mutual imbrications of science and religion in British India. Far from being mutually exclusive, inherently antagonistic spheres of endeavor as popularly imagined, they represented realms of activity, thought, and sentiment that intersected, overlapped, and merged in many circumstances. Whereas the government assumed control of Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb in their bid to preserve it, the Mundeswari temple was privately owned and operated for at least part of its modern history. The government negotiated with the owners to allow ASI preservation of the temple in exchange for allowing archaeological investigations at the site.[131] While some temple owners (such as the priests of some of Bhubaneswar's temples) resisted this government involvement, those at Mundeswari obviously considered the advantages of subsidized maintenance worth the burdens of ASI research. Unexpectedly, science helped return the state to the role it performed during Mughal and early East India Company governance when rulers patronized ritual centers, a practice curbed by evangelical Christian protests in Britain.

Nevertheless, the information projects promoted by the British state brought many changes, especially epistemic ones that introduced new intellectual paradigms without, necessarily, entirely displacing older ones.

> What can a man do, but submit to Time;
> What indeed can a ball do but to obey the polo-mallet.[132]

Government efforts to preserve this Persian inscription in Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb starkly countered the verse's sentiment. Instead of surrendering the mausoleum to the vicissitudes of natural decay, the government invested thousands of rupees in its repair and maintenance. In effect, it sought to defy time by conserving an object paradoxically valued because of its singular location in time. Meanwhile, in his reflections quoted at the chapter's beginning, Sub-Divisional Officer Ray demonstrated that British opinion regarding such perspectives was in no degree uniform. In an unexpected switch of sympathies triggered by an unusual onset of Romanticism, he would perhaps have better appreciated the Persian poet's sentiment than the ASI's conservationalism. Clearly the crisp lines of realigned walls and the smoothness of leveled flagstones would have impinged on the quiet decrepitude of the centuries-old tomb on which he enjoyed his morning tea.

# 8

# Chainpur Today

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DARKNESS HAD FALLEN and so Raju has already lit his kerosene lantern to hold back the night. None of the lantern's glow falls outside since he has closed the shutters tight against the winter cold. The twenty-four-year-old man graciously takes time so I can ask some questions about the history of Chainpur where he lives with his family near the Muslim-majority village Naughara and all-Hindu Malik Sarai. Interested in local memories of the British Raj, I ask him if the English had come to the area. He replies, "I don't know anything about the English empire. I only know some about Muslim people."

ME: Like who?
RAJU: Muslim people like Alauddin Khilji.
ME: Tell me about that.
RAJU: There was a Muslim empire.
ME: And?
RAJU: Before the English there was a government . . . So those Muslim people in Naughara, Chainpur, and [another place], they got money to become Muslim. Like Naughara, they were Rajputs before but took the money to become Muslims. Or Malk Sarai. There were two Rajput brothers. One brother took money from Alauddin Khilji out of greed. And Rajputs in Malik Sarai took money.
ME: Where did you hear about this?
RAJU: My mother's father told me, and her brother. That tomb, people say, was Bakhtiyar Khilji's. Suddenly Bakhtihar Khilji died.
ME: Who lives in your village?

RAJU: Before, my father's father had three sons: my father and two brothers... There was development: a good hospital and schools. Hindus were in great abundance.

I then turned the conversation to other matters while nursing my surprise at the direction Raju's account took. I had known Raju's father and uncle for a long while, and had never heard them speak of the past in this manner.

The short question-and-answer session demonstrates clearly four themes in the socialization Raju's family provides him. First, that the more distant past of Muslim rule matters more than the intervening two centuries of British rule because, second, it illuminates the religious divide that most prominently typifies Indian history, with caste mattering as well. Third, Raju's answers show that an architectural monument serves as a central symbol of the era of Muslim domination while, fourth, local narratives can defy national historiography. Given that for more than a century, historians, archaeologists, and historians of art have identified the tomb Raju mentions as that of Bakhtiyar Khan, not Khilji, and that a signpost erected by the Archaeological Survey of India probably testified to this before it disappeared some years ago, it may seem odd that Raju and most residents of the area use a different name. Moreover, given the significance of the British Raj in the nationalist coming-of-age story that overshadows the treatment of any other history taught in local schools from the earliest ages, it is perplexing that such a distant past can feature so much more prominently in the minds of some than the long era of British domination.

This contrast demonstrates a rift between nationalist historiography and local memory. The divergence evidences at least two information orders: one promoted by, consecutively, the British imperial and independent Indian governments, and the other resonant among the residents of the Chainpur area. Given the hegemony of both the imperial and national states and the strength of their respective information orders, the success of these memories to resist the science by which Britons and Indians have sought to know Bakhtiyar's tomb illustrates both the qualities and limits of scientism. The multiple understandings of the *roza* of Bakhtiyar provides just one example of how the residents of this village area negotiate rifts and confluences in scientistic and local epistemes that have roots in the past, ramifications for current social classifications, and implications for the future.

## CHAINPUR TODAY

The differences between Chainpur during the Raj and in the twenty-first century (see Illustration 8.1) are more than epistemic. Reversing a declining trend between 1872 and 1921 when the village population decreased from four thousand to twenty-five hundred, in 2001 Chainpur's population had risen to 8,979.[1] While the Census of India technically classifies any community of more than five thousand as a town, Chainpur area

ILLUSTRATION 8.1. View of Chainpur, looking northwest. 2009.

residents continue to refer to the settlement as a *gao* (village). With its narrow central bazaar that leads workers, shoppers, farmers, merchants, and pilgrims through the length of the village, Chainpur's social environment remains intimate compared to that found among the broad streets lined with concrete-sided buildings in Bhabua, the district headquarters ten kilometers away. As the village grows, its neighborhoods gradually reach northward toward the same road that has always connected it eastward to Bhabua and Sasaram, and westward to Benares via National Highway 2 (the former Grand Trunk Road). Until recently, much of this artery could be as pothole plagued as in 1940 when Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Ray complained about it having pits like bomb craters. However, the new millennium brought a change in local and state government that made concerted efforts to improve the region's infrastructure, including substantial repairs not only to major roads but also to Chainpur's streets. While many remain as ramshackle as before, regional buses chockablock with passengers now hurdle down the larger roads, gaining their destinations far more quickly than when they laboriously negotiated the disintegrating ribbon of remaining tarmac. These improvements quicken Chainpur's economic ties to Benares 60 kilometers to the west, its political connections to Patna 180 kilometers to the northeast, and educational links to both cities. Meanwhile, pilgrims more easily find their ways to Harsu Brahm's temple as well as to some area Muslim tombs, including Bakhtiyar Khan's.

The telecommunication revolution has even more vastly expanded Chainpur's connections beyond its satellite villages. In 1994, area elites received their first phone landlines. By 1998, residents could call other states from phone booths in the bazaar. A cell phone tower arose by 2004 and, four years later, five others had joined it. Satellite dishes

offer dozens of news and entertainment channels compared to the spare few government-run stations available at the turn of the century. Flat-screen televisions take pride of place in households wealthy enough to own one, while bazaar shops rent digital videos. Slowly, some shops and families have bought computers, and Internet connectivity is imminent. Digital information systems, meanwhile, work both ways, bringing the world increasingly to Chainpur and vice versa. Hoping to attract more tourists and pilgrims, the website for the district features Harsu Brahm's temple, Bakhiyar's mausoleum, and the Mundeswari temple. For a while, Chainpur, and Harsu Brahm had Wikipedia entries, but these have dissolved into the ephemeral haze of the Internet's near past. However, not only has the entry for the Mundeswari temple survived, but it can be found from the temple's Facebook page (which 15 people "like," at least as of this book's publication).[2] Meanwhile, throughout this period of growing electronification of the village, newspaper vendors have continued to distribute Hindi and English dailies to subscribers.*

Despite Ray's persistent fear of communal violence erupting in Chainpur, none apparently has occurred since he left. In fact, partition did not have the effect on the district as earlier reports of communal tensions might have suggested it would. Census data shows only a modest decline in the percentage of Muslims (coupled with an overall gain in their numbers) relative to the total population between 1941 and 1951.† Half a century later, the census placed the Hindu and Muslim populations at 90% and 9.6% respectively of the district's total.[3] Nevertheless, just as a Sufi's *urs* celebration atop the fort almost occasioned a riot in 1928, certain ritual moments become moments of tension, perhaps prompting Hindu fears that a Muslim procession will imperil a revered tree or Muslim impatience with Hindu devotional music blaring during a festival. For instance, in 1995 police intervened to avoid a potential conflict when a Muharram procession *tazia* got hung up in a neem tree, quite similar to the conflict in which Ray interceded as described in chapter 4. In both situations, a practiced solution averted serious confrontation. Since the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 1980s, Hindu nationalist movements and political parties occasionally have heightened Muslim nervousness about their minority status in Chainpur, Bihar, and India; yet, some area Muslims have voted for the BJP in local elections. Population and poll statistics, along with police incident reports, only provide some frames in which to understand everyday life in Chainpur: frames reliant on the same strictly construed categories deployed by the British. Classificatory dynamics on the village's streets, however, can vary markedly.

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* Chainpur residents tend to speak Bhojpuri for their *lingua franca*, Hindi or Urdu for more formal conversations, and English only if they have finished high school and encounter an Anglophone with whom they share no other language.

† The percentage of the district's overall population who were Muslims declined from 7.6% in 1941 to 6.6% in 1951. Archer 1942, 30–31, 34–35; Prasad 1953, 310–311.

## CONVERSATIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Chainpur residents, like most people, rely on a variety of classification schema in their conversations about their neighbors. Gender, age, profession, religion, caste/*baradari*, and birthplace are but a few of the metacategories of differentiation that can be employed, according to the conversational context. In my attempts to discern whether any particular classifications dominated the perspectives of Chainpur area residents, I made a practice of asking a range of residents regarding who lived (*Kaun rehte hain?*) in a particular neighborhood or village. Of course, given that residents now know about my interest in local identities and religions, one might suspect that they pitched their answer according to what they thought I wanted to hear. However, their replies largely reaffirmed impressions gained over fifteen years of participating in and listening to conversations among village residents. Most particularly, their answers demonstrated that while nearly everyone knows nearly everyone else's gender, age, profession, religion, and caste/*baradari*, most do not see any one of these as anyone's *final* identity. Although some may strive hard to portray members of another community (*wo log*, or "those people") as inherently and completely different, most—in certain contexts—speak about members of that community in ways that demonstrate shared identities. Meanwhile, conversations among villagers demonstrate that *religion* often serves as a very real category in their discourse. In sum, although some Chainpur-area residents abstractly portray their local, regional, and national society primarily though religion and caste/*baradari* categories, when speaking of specific individuals, they tend to refer to them using a wide range of social identities that reflect the myriad social groups to which any individual may belong.

As demonstrated in my conversation above with Raju, some Chainpur residents answered my question about who lives in their village or neighborhood without reference to caste/*baradari* or religion, yet these were in the minority (indeed, even Raju mentions Hindus once being in abundance in his home village). So, for instance, when I ask Asha Bibi who resides in the neighborhood where she lives as a middle-class resident, she replies "Hindus live here, also Muslims live here." Her son offers that Christians live there too, a point she confirms. In my conversations, reliance on religion and caste/*baradari* did not vary according to the identity of the conversant. When I ask an ailing Bahadur Ansari who lives in his *muhalla* (neighborhood), this fifty-something-year-old Muslim answers in a mixture of Urdu and Bhojpuri: *Ansari-Pathan rahte dono hain. Ansari-Pathan rahte hain. Kai jat* ("Ansaris and Pathans both live there. Ansaris and Pathans live there. Many *jat*s.") *Kai?* I query. *Khan sahib, Ahir—Yadav—and Dhobi*, he responds, referring to Pathans again and two others *jat*s. Other residents also followed Bahadur's practice of referring to "Hindu" and "Muslim" each as a *jat*, demonstrating the same intermingling of religious and caste/*baradari* identities evident since, at least, British census efforts. For instance, at Santa Singh's shop one day, I ask another man present who lives in Santa's neighborhood. He replies in Hindi, *Ham, Brahman log. Lohar, kuc*

*Muhammadan log bhi hain* ("We, are Brahmans. Lohars and some Muslims also are there.")

With a political discourse dominated by efforts to win the "vote banks" of specifically religious and caste groups, India's media repeatedly reinscribes these categorical divisions in its social and political portrayals of the nation. For instance, in preparation for assembly elections in 2005, the popular English-language magazine *India Today* offered its readers the following demographic outline of Bihar:

| | |
|---|---|
| Yadavs 11% | EBC 28%[‡] |
| Thakurs 4% | Muslims 15% |
| Dalits 15% | Kurmis 4% |
| Koeris 4% | Banias 10% |
| Brahmins 5% | Kayasthas 2.5% |
| Paswans 5% | Bhumihars 4%[4] |

The magazine's assumption—mirroring and reaffirming those of many readers—is that members of these caste and religion groups share a singular set of distinctive interests to which candidates and parties cater in order to secure their block vote. While campaigns often endeavor to do just this, their success is mixed historically. For instance, the assumption by some Hindus that all of Bihar's eighty-three million Muslims vote en mass is undermined by the diverse electoral preferences of Chainpur's Muslims, as demonstrated by the claim of some to prefer the Bharatiya Janata Party, despite its occasional use of Islamophobic sloganeering. Nevertheless, in the run-up to elections, conversations among men at tea stalls and in homes often veer toward speculation regarding which religion and caste groups will back which parties.

Given their pervasiveness in political discourse, religious and caste/*baradari* identifiers become easy to take for granted as a natural way in which to describe not only state and national political groups, but also neighborhoods and villages. However, the wiliness of Santa Singh demonstrates how the use of religious and caste categories is a chosen discursive practice, not an inherent classificatory necessity. Talking one day as the steady traffic of Chainpur's main bazaar streams back and forth in front of his shop, I repeat my well-practiced routine and ask Santa who lives in the *muhalla* behind his store. He answers, *Log. Admi. Sab admi* ("Folks. People. All people.") He smiles. To my chagrin, Santi gamely avoids the types of answers that he knows his neighbors have given, which he knows then I expect to hear as well. He had done the same some weeks earlier when I asked him who lives in the United States and he started giving me individual's names ("George Bush. You.") with the same Cheshire-cat smile. My aggravation with his

‡ Extremely backward classes.

circumvention gives way to gratitude when I realize how this clever man had demonstrated the two extreme, yet plausible options for answering my question: either with a category that includes everyone (*log*, *admi*) or by naming individuals without reference to categories (George, Peter). The decision to use social groups in answer to the question reflects both the categories available to the respondent and her or his assumptions regarding the inquisitor's interest.[§]

Although the complete impact of the British episteme on the meanings and uses of *jati* and *baradari* classifications remains difficult to definitively determine, there can be little doubt that the European category of *religion* has left an enduring impact. In perhaps the most salient instance of this, the term *dharm* acquired a new connotation that complemented its earlier meanings of "duty," "morality," and "virtue." Beginning in the nineteenth century, Hindi speakers used the term—derived from the Sanskrit *dharma*—to also connote "religion" in its Western formulation of a reified system of beliefs, practices, and ethics. Amitav Singh offered an example of this usage one day as we shared chai in one of Chainpur's dozen or so teashops. Now in his sixties, this fieldworker was a schoolboy for ten years.

ME: What is the meaning of *dharm*?

AMITAV: It is the *bandhan* (established rule or custom) of society—that's what any *dharm* is. You acknowledge your mother and father, you acknowledge *deva* and *devata* (gods)... you acknowledge the *Gita* and *Ramayan*.

ME: What's the difference between *religion* and *dharm*?

AMITAV: To us people, established practice is the meaning of *dharm*.

ME: What is the difference between *mazhab* and *dharm*?

AMITAV: *Mazhab* is an Urdu word and *dharm* is a Hindi word. Those people do *namaz* (daily prayer) and read the Quran. We people read the *Gita*.

ME: What is the meaning of *sanathan dharm*?

AMITAV: ... It means *purana* (old)... Don't cause sadness. Don't commit *pap* (sin)... Acknowledge your mother and father. It means *purana*: hundreds of thousands of years.

ME: And what does *sampradaya* mean?

AMITAV: Muslims follow Muslim *dharm*. Christian folks follow Christian *dharm*. Panjabi people follow Panjabi *dharm*.

Through repeated instances of this line of questioning, asking Chainpur area residents to explain a set of terms relative to one another, it became clear that although the terms'

[§] Again, it is reasonable to question whether residents responded to my questions using categories they though fit my interests. However, scores of additional conversations among residents to which I was a present, but passive, audience member provided enough evidence that they use religion and caste categories in discursive contexts beyond formal interviews with me. In a later conversation, Santa agreed that most area residents would answer my questions in terms of religion and caste.

meanings varied among interlocutors, many used *dharm* in the same manner as Amitav Singh. For them, multiple *dharm*s existed as established rules that required particular practices as well as beliefs. The term thus serves as a comparative category—synonymous with the Sanskrit-originated *sampradaya* and Arabic-derived *mazhab*—that distinguishes the practices (acknowledging the gods and *namaz*) and books (Gita and Quran) of specific religious communities (Muslims, Christians, and Panjabis [read: Sikhs]). Meanwhile, *sampradaya* can also refer to divisions within religions. So, for instance, a teacher in one private school asks his class what *sampradaya*s exist among Muslims and the students dutifully respond "Sunni and Shia." He then asks about Hindus and immediately answers his own question, *Hindu dharm men bahut sampradaya* ("In the Hindu *dharm* there are many *sampradaya*").

While residents generally used *mazhab* and *sampradaya* in ways comparable to this Anglophone use of *religion*, the terms *dharm* and *din* (borrowed from Arabic) sometimes have a more exclusive connotation. As Amitav Singh demonstrated, Hindus often refer to *Sanathan dharm* as an ancient—even timeless—premise to all religions. As one resident explained, *Sanatan dharm sab hi dharm ka janak hai* ("*Sanatan dharm* is the father of every single *dharm*.") Others argue that *Sanatan dharm* is synonymous with Hindu *dharm*, and is meant for everyone, including Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians. In these formulations, *Sanatan dharm* becomes a tree trunk from which the various *sampradaya*s (or *mazhab*s or religions) stem.** In contrast with this universal appropriation of all religions under the umbrella of *Sanatan dharm*, some Muslims use the term *din* to exclude all practices except Islam. For them, no *din* existed until Muhammad brought the Quran. Non-Muslims follow *mazhab*s, while Muslims follow *din*. Although the arguments these particular Hindus and Muslims pursue often come from entirely different directions, their outcome is the same: a comparative claim that establishes the exclusively superior position of their *dharm* or *mazhab* relative to all others.

Although some Chainpur residents use these terms in ways similar to how Westerners often use "religion" (i.e., a reified system of belief and practice, like "Judaism" and "Christianity"), others refer to particular identities and communities. During a visit to the *barahdari* (twelve doors), a Suri-era construction atop the mountainous spur that looms to Chainpur's west, I and Ahmed Khan—a university student from a nearby village—meet a man, three women, and two children visiting the site. One woman, wearing a sari around her thin body, a *tika* (ornamental mark) on her forehead, and red *sindhur* in her hair part lights incense sticks before throwing the box on the ground inside the building. I ask them about the site, which many consider a Sufi's tomb.

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** In a way, this use comes close to the singular English use of *religion* as a universal phenomenon. That is to say, in comparison with the use of the term that can be used in the plural and presumes multiple systems of belief, practice, and ethics, another use—always in the singular—assumes the global possibility of a particular human fact.

MAN: It was built in Bakhtiyar Khilji's time. In an earlier time, an army was here. That's why this is here. Take a look.

ME: Is there *shakti* (power) here? *Takat* (power)?

MAN: Yes. There is *shakti*.

ME: What does it do?

MAN: If people have sorrow or troubles, so people come here. People come from far away.

ME: Why have you come here?

MAN: We have some problems. And also, we wanted to go for a walk.

[Later, the visiting man motions to the east and says that on that mountain is a temple. Ahmed gives its name, Mundeswari.]

MAN: For people of Hindu *dharm*, it is very *shaktishali* (powerful).

ME: And for you?

WOMAN IN SARI: No.

AHMED: It's not part of our *jat*.

WOMAN IN SARI: *Hindu jat hai* (That's for the Hindu community). It's wrong for us.

Although the male visitor mentions Hindu *dharm*, his emphasis is on the *people* of the Hindu *dharm*, not on some abstract notion of Hinduism. Meanwhile, unwittingly challenging the simple binaries by which many Britons preferred that collapse north Indian Muslims, Islam, and Urdu together in tandem with the conflation of north Indian Hindus, Hinduism, and Hindi, these three Muslim interlocutors all use terms that derive from Sanskrit: *shakti*, *shaktishali*, and *dharm*. Despite the availability of Persian and Arabic-based alternatives like *takat* and *mazhab*, these visitors show no preference for them. Indeed, their use of vocabulary echoes the flexibility and personal choice of the women's dress. While two wear the *shalwar-kamiz* (baggy pants and lengthy blouse) many Britons described as "Muslim dress," the other dons a sari instead, complemented by a *tika* and *sindur* that British observors often labeled "Hindu." Meanwhile, they participate in incense-marked prayers at a supposed Sufi tomb like many of the pilgrims who come before and after them. However, despite this inclusivity in practice that complements that of their terminology and dress, the two interlocutors demonstrate an exclusivity in regard to a different practice, considering prayer at a temple a mistake for Muslims. Like these devotees, most Chainpur residents color their lives outside the two-dimensional borders drawn by religious communalists and simplistic scholarship.

Overall, therefore, Chainur residents have a variety of terms from which to choose to portray what Anglophones would describe as *religion*, *religions*, and *sect*. As with Anglophones, their use of these words is not uniform. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the impact of European notions of religion, however limited, to create comparative categories that in many cases are mutually exclusive, if not hierarchically valuated.

## SCIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

The notion of science has an overwhelmingly positive connotation in Chainpur. The terms most frequently used by Hindi and Urdu speakers to refer to highly systematized and empirical forms of knowledge associated with Western origins and the latest research are *science*, *vijnan*, and—less commonly—*vidya*. This contrasts with *jnan* that tends to refer to general knowledge (hence the frequent use of *jnani* to connote "knowledgable.") Less often, Urdu speakers use *ilm* when referring to religious knowledge. More commonly, Chainpur residents speak about religion and science as though they are distinguishable, yet potentially overlapping, realms of activity. While some view science as a potential threat to religion, others attribute only a positive valiance to science, especially when viewed in its close association with development (*vikas*, *taraqqi*). Despite their generally high regard for economic, technological, and scientific changes associated with Western-originated science, many Chainpur residents practice a number of indigenous epistemes drawing from pre-British traditions.

Some Chainpur residents appear to appropriate the moniker of science in order to validate, if not valorize, their traditions in defensive response to a perceived Western imperiousness toward India's progress. So, for instance, Karna Singh, a former block development officer, one day discussed a recent NASA survey of the string of islands that reach like steppingstones from south India to Sri Lanka. He approvingly noted that satellite photos had proven these to be remnants of the bridge Ram's army purportedly had lain 1,750,000 years ago between the two landmasses. Just as some Hindus claim that the flying chariot that the demon Ravan pilots in the *Ramayan* demonstrates ancient Indians' ability to fly, so the Prophet Muhammad's flight on the human-headed horse Buraq proves something similar for at least one Muslim. One day, while bicycling past Humaid Khan's medical practice, he calls out to me. He's a doctor of Yunani (Greek) medicine, and often chats with visitors who pass by in Chainpur's secondary bazaar. The size of the crowd waxes and wanes as we speak in Urdu within the cool of his open walled office, shaded against the strong, late afternoon sun.

DR. KHAN: A lot of scientists research the Quran. Today, there are airplanes. But thirteen hundred years ago Muhammad *sharif* ("noble") flew in the *miraj* (Muhammad's night journey on Buraq from Mecca to a place popularly regarded as Jerusalem).

ME: What else?

DR. KHAN: Major scientists say there's nothing. They say that it all comes from the earth. But that power comes from God.

ME: What else do scientists find in the Quran?

DR. KHAN: Knowledge, lifestyle: there's a lot in there. Everything is in there.

In an instance similar to Dr. Khan's claim that scientists mine the Quran for modern knowledge, another area resident referred to the popular origin narrative of the god Ganesh that explains how the goddess Parvati created him by scraping her skin. Udayana Tripathi, a college teacher and son of a *purohit* at Harsu Brahm's temple, explained that this indicated that Parvati had cloned herself. Tracing the Ganesh-Parvati story to the Vedas, he then concluded that Mary's virgin conception of Jesus is, therefore, a Vedic concept. Using a logic that resemblance proves derivation, Tripathi appropriates a cornerstone Christian myth and twenty-first-century cloning science to the Hindu tradition, subsuming them as historical sequels to the Vedas.

While some Chainpur residents use science to validate religious claims and others view science as challenging religion, yet others consider the two as entirely distinct epistemic realms. For instance, when one day I playfully talk with a child about animal tails, his father replies that humans used to all have tails since we're descended from monkeys, but that they had fallen off. But, I ask, what about the Vedas that talk about the creation of the original person, Purusha? He replies that the fact that we come from monkeys is from Darwin, *Bijnan*[††] *ki bat hai*. (It's a scientific matter). Science." I ask that if the matter of the tails is a matter of science, the Veda is a matter of what? While explaining to me what the Veda says, the father refers to it as a matter of *mazhab*.

A variety of conversations over the last two decades have reinforced this sense that although some view science as exclusive of religion, it can still complement religious situations. These have included claims that Vivekananda's speech at the World Parliament of Religion (1893) seemed to have lasted twenty-four hours when it was only five minutes ("This is science, not a *dharmik* matter"); that winding the twice-born's thread (*janeu*) around the ear has a beneficial "scientific" function aiding bodily excretion; and that the worship of the sun during the annual Chath Puja has a scientific benefit of aiding the body. The complementarities of science and religion (at least some of them) even figured into criticisms of one religious community by another that Chainpur residents occasionally voiced. In one example, I am speaking in Urdu with three members of a Muslim family in the comfort of their home's *darwaza* (reception area). They endeavor to demonstrate how Jews, Christians, and Muslims have a natural belief in one god while devotion to the multiple gods of Hindus and their variety of forms is "anti-nature."

MUJIZ: They believe in Kali, but if a girl like that is born in the house, they become worried and pray to Ram.

TAJRIB: It is the same with Hanuman. If a child has a monkey's head, what will they think?

[††] Bhopjuri speakers frequently replace the consonant *va* with *ba*.

MUJIZ: It is not "scientific." They have a *murti* (statue). Does God have to be washed? They worship snakes. So why worship what you do not need help from? During Nag Pancami they give milk to God. But, if they see a snake, they will kill it.

TAJRIB: So they kill God. It is not "scientific."

MUJIZ: Another logic with them: They say that the oldest *dharm* is the Hindu *dharm*, therefore it is true. But people lived in the jungle before; they ate jungle animals. So do they mean that we should do that too? Give up civilization?

TAJRIB: And they say that the cow is a form of God. But if a cow is in a field, they'll strike it with a *lathi* (bamboo stave) using two hands. So how do you hit God? They will hit it with a sharp stave and it will go off bleeding. The cow is "mother," but where is "father"? Where is the "science"?

These men discount Hindu beliefs because they do not appear logical, a quality that they consider definitive to science. They imply that Islam, when practiced properly (which they later explained is not the case in India), is inherently scientific. Negating claims that the originality of Hindu traditions valorizes them, Mujiz suggests that Islam's scientific qualities are developmental. Celebrating Hindu *dharm*'s ancientness becomes akin to voiding the developments of history, while Islam represents the possibility of humanity's historical improvement. Hence, Mujiz later recommends that I read *Religion and Science* by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, who argues that since Islamic theology relies upon the same type of logic as modern science, then theological conclusions are as valid as scientific ones. These associations of the proper truths of religion with the findings of science offer yet further evidence of scientism's pervasiveness in contemporary Chainpur.

For others, religion and science stand in opposition with one another in a zero-sum contest. Some village residents expect *dharm* to slowly yield to science over time. For instance, in 1995 the elderly and authoritative Baba Singh explained that women used to sing as part of a *puja* (worship) to alleviate droughts. However, twenty years earlier this had come to an end when *vidya* (knowledge, science) brought canals and electricity. A decade later, I am speaking with a cantankerous Muizzuddin Khan outside his *darwaza* in one of Chainpur's satellite villages. He rues that science is so developed nowadays that *nautch-gana* (dance and song) has become popular, leading people to leave *mazhab*. Why don't people wear *pyjama-kurta* (wide pants and long shirt)? He directs my attention to a small group of boys returning from school in Chainpur and claims that they will demand to wear shirt-pant since men do not wear *pyjama-kurta* in the bazaar. In Muizzuddin's mind, science is allied with both the technology that readily brings Bollywood films and popular music into the village and the changing preferences to wear dress many associate with the West like shirts and pants. Science, therefore, represents part of the foreign enticements that have undermined traditions in religion and dress.

While some residents associate science with better farming, a local agricultural form of knowledge provides on example of how Western-originated forms have not displaced all indigenous ones. Jaideo Singh of Jagariya, another member of Chainpur's village nexus, farmed the substantial lands owned by his family until his recent death. In 1994, he related the complex calendar by which he and others patterned their agricultural activities. Each of the three annual seasons divides into two halves. Simultaneously, he followed the twenty-eight *naksatr*s (lunar mansions), each lasting about fifteen days each. The *naksatr* of Hathiya divides into four four-day periods during the monsoon, when the all-important rice paddy needs tending: *loha* (iron), *tama* (copper), *rupa* (silver), and *sona* (gold). Farmers like Jaideo Singh—whether Hindu or Muslim—use this calendar to carefully follow the weather since either a surfeit or surplus of rain in any of the periods has particular outcomes according to this episteme. Meanwhile, as though addressing empiricist-minded skeptics, the elder farmer carefully noted that this episteme is "traditional," yet also "practical" since one adjusts it according to what one sees: it is not something to read (*parhna*), but to observe. While Jaideo Singh was unable to give the name of every *naksatr*, he explained that pandits know these as part of their familiarity with *jyotis* (astrology). Of course, *jyotis* represents one of the most pervasive forms of knowledge that has survived the ascent of scientism.

A final set of forms of knowledge evident in Chainpur that originate outside Europe can be found among its non-allopathic medicinal practices. On another day of conversation with Dr. Khan, the Yunani practitioner mentioned above, he shows me a newspaper clipping indicating that the government will allot Rs. 15,000 a month for doctors of Yunani, Ayurvedic, and homeopathic medicine in rural areas. Qualified candidates need a bachelor's degree in either Yunani or Ayurvedic medicine or a doctorate in homeopathy, all of which can be obtained from government universities. Dr. Khan had studied in Patna, having grown up in Chainpur with a father who had practiced Yunani medicine there. As we sit talking in Urdu and Hindi with Sita Ram Singh of Malik Sarai—whose family is related to Dr. Khan's through the narrative of the two Rajput brothers who arrived with Bakhtiyar Khilji—I ask about these forms of medicine. He explains that one Ayurvedic and three or four homeopathic doctors practice in Chainpur. As for Yunani medicine, "Much came from Arabic, that's why many who study it are Muslim. It's like Hindus studying Ayurved because of Sanskrit. There are no chemicals in Yunani medicine—it's 'pure.'" When I ask whether Western medicine has chemicals, he says "Yes. And there are no side effects [to Yunani] either. In the US there are a lot of practitioners. Medical companies too." The offices of allopathic practitioners can be found scattered about Chainpur, while the village's half-dozen medicine shops stock a varying mix of allopathic, homeopathic, Ayurvedic, and Yunani medicines. Although many area residents associate the science brought by Britons with improved medical treatment, these preexisting systems of medicine not only continue, but find a place in government universities. Although scientism has not spelled the doom of all indigenous forms of

knowledge, it has challenged the survival of many, a dynamic reflected also in narratives regarding Chainpur's past.

## NARRATING THE PAST

The prevalence with which area residents use narratives regarding Chainpur's past to introduce outsiders to the area demonstrates how centrally the past figures in their understanding of the village. The relative stability of the raja-*brahm* narrative cycle over two centuries evidences a concerted effort to maintain consistency in its telling. It dominates local social memories as much as the gate to the erstwhile raja's fort looms over the central bazaar (see Illustration 8.2). In contrast, the lack of memories regarding local British rule relative to fairly standardized ones regarding country-wide British domination reflects how formal education has communicated an Indian nationalist historiography that eclipses almost all local narratives of this period. Overall, the narratives Chainpur residents tell of their collective past demonstrates both a resistance to and influence of historiographical models.

Compared with my first stay in the area, during my subsequent visits over more than fifteen years, residents decreasingly introduced themselves by asking if I have heard of Raja Salivahan, Harsu Brahm, and Bakhtiyar Khilji. Locals clearly use the narrative as a way of orienting visitors in the area temporally (by narrating the origins of the village's distinctive qualities) and spatially (by physically pointing to the various relics during this narration). In fact, nowadays some will meet a question from me about any of these

ILLUSTRATION 8.2. Gate, Chainpur fort. 2009.

figures with the challenge, "But you already know about that." Both the prevalence of and slight variations among the raja-*brahm* narratives in the accounts of Francis Buchanan, William Bowley, Chandrasekhara Banurji, Alexander Cunningham, Khairat Ali, T. Bloch, and Chandra Kumar Mathur (as explored in chapter 6) demonstrate the remarkable consistency of the narrative across two centuries. Without these minor disparities in the renditions—many of which can be heard today—we might suspect that these authors simply reproduced previously published versions, as is obvious in the accounts of others. Sadly, we do not have evidence of the epistemic apparatus by which Chainpur residents one or two centuries ago maintained their narratives of the raja and *brahm*, verified their truthfulness, and connected it with other past events. But one of our reporters noted a written version of the cycle, which suggests that it was largely oral, as it is now. Indeed, because most of these authors did not contextualize their reception of the narratives they record, we do not know if residents then offered the visitors an account as an introduction to their region as they do now or provided a version in response to questions from these visiting writers who had read an earlier rendition of the narrative cycle. Whatever the case, both the relative consistency of the iterations reported between 1810 and today, and the non-historiographic tools contemporarily used to tell, evidence, and maintain versions of the narrative demonstrate that local systems of remembering were not, and are not, as subjective, unsystematic, and volatile as many historians and archaeologists have thought. While I will not repeat my previous arguments regarding the richly nuanced and sophisticated efforts to maintain, communicate, and debate this cycle as a social memory,[5] it bears repeating that concerns with veracity, legitimating authority, and referencing evidence an endemic system of remembering the past.

One historical change that we can discern in regard to the raja-*brahm* cycle appears to be the connection to "Bakhtiyar Khilji" and his mausoleum outside Chainpur. While the narrative's core remains the same as it has for centuries—with the story of a Chainpur raja who infringes on his Brahman vizier's property at the instigation of his wife with the result that the Brahman destroys him after becoming a *brahm*—the agent of that destruction has changed. Only in two of the seven original recordings of the narrative (Banurji's 1877 account and Cunningham's 1884 version) does the *brahm* makes the emperor/king in Delhi the vehicle of his vengeance, and none connect him to the *roza* (tomb). In contrast, almost every narrator whom I have encountered since 1994 has referred to "Bakhtiyar Khilji" as the *brahm*'s chosen hit man, while pointing to his mausoleum as evidence for his involvement. The change seems particularly noteworthy given two facts. First, at no point did any historical visitor claim that locals associated the name "Khilji" with the tomb. Although the initial name varied among reports, the secondary name consistently remained "Khan." Second, in 1931, Maulvi Muhammad Hamid Kuraishi, officiating superintendent for the Archæological Survey of India's Central Circle, noticed that the previously varying local usage apparently had become standardized to the name "Bakhtiyar Khan," adopted by the ASI in 1903. While it is impossible to determine the cause for both the name change and the linkage, it seems noteworthy that many historians consider

Bakhtiyar Khilji responsible for the establishment of "Muslim rule" in Bihar and Bengal. Has local interest in Harsu Brahm (and his shrine) and Raja Salivahan (and his fort) intersected Hindu nationalist concerns about the Muslim presence in India, thus appropriating the area's Suri-era tombs in an effort to forge a connection between two sets of previously unconnected relics and narratives? Has it been strengthened by the presence in Chainpur of at least one copy of the 1968 publication of a *kursinama* (described below) that narrates the local raja's demise at the hands of Nawab Bakhtiyar Khan Khilji? Indeed, reconciling the submission of the "Hindu India" that they glorify to the success of the "Muslim invasions" that they vilify proves a challenge to many Hindu chauvinists. Certainly, this iteration of the raja-*brahm*-emperor narrative gives a Hindu (Harsu) agency for the area's conquest, while still denigrating its Muslim occupiers (who purchase the conversion of area Hindus according to Raju's narrative, above).

If this iteration of the raja-*brahm*-emperor narrative intends to cut in these ways, it appears to do so in deliberate reaction to the alternative theme of communal unity many Chainpur residents interpret it to communicate, and use it to promote. After all, both Hindus and Muslims narrate forms of this cycle as a manifestation of their pride in the village. By referencing the well-known shrine and enormous mausoleum, locals distinguish theirs from the region's other villages. Moreover, for those so inclined, the narrative can promote a message of *Hindu-Muslim bhai-bhai* (Hindu-Muslim fraternity) given its inter-communal nature. An ancillary narrative redoubles this message as it describes how two Rajput brothers served as leaders of Bakhtiyar's forces before settling in the area villages Naughara and Malik Sarai, one converting to Islam and becoming a Pathan. Even today, members of these families—like Dr. Humaid Khan and Sita Ram Singh mentioned above—view themselves as relatives, despite occasionally raucous tensions between them. This returns us to our earlier point about classification: for most Chainpur residents, individuals are known for their multiple social identities, while groups get collapsed into singular categories. Revisiting Raju's brief iteration of the brothers' story, we see how it undermines the *bhai-bhai* message by impeaching both the Pathans of Naughara (whose progenitor converted out of greed) and the Rajputs of Malik Sarai (whose ancestor impugned himself by taking money from the Muslim Alauddin Khilji). That Raju's family has far less social status than the Rajput family may not be incidental to the telling.

While knowledge of the raja-*brahm*-emperor narrative varies little according to the religion, caste, or class of the narrator, the same cannot be said about stories regarding British rule. A clear relationship exists between the degree of formal education and memories of the Raj. Yet, given both how prominently British rule figures into Indian history as taught in its schools and the constancy of the raja-*brahm* narrative cycle, it appears surprising how little memory exists about imperialism's impact on Chainpur. Certainly Ray's journal demonstrates that British officers were not infrequent visitors to Chainpur, at least in the waning days of empire. Moreover, the area includes architectural relics that might serve as a mnemonic referent for narratives in a manner comparable to how resi-

dents reference the fort, temple, and tomb while narrating about the raja, *brahm*, and emperor. The remnants of an indigo factory, perhaps the one once run by cultivator E. G. Bingham mentioned in chapter 7, stands outside Naughara, as do the foundations of a house associated with "Basanti Bibi," who residents variously describe as English, Anglo-Indian, or Indian, and driven off either by bees or a lawsuit. Nevertheless, recollections of local British involvement prove sparse, and seldom are offered without precise prompting. Among the only memories that have survived were communicated by Baba Ram Karan Singh, an elderly freedom fighter, and an equally aged Nathuni Prasad Singh, both now deceased. Between them, they mentioned the names of a few officers who camped near Malik Sarai and hunted in the Kaimur Hills.[‡‡] At the time these men lived, most Chainpur residents would refer to them to answer questions about the British presence. Now that they are dead, their memories appear perilously preserved, with only a few of their family and neighbors able to repeat in detail what these men once said.

Despite the presence of a sub-divisional officer in Bhabua whose work would have required his occasional presence in Chainpur (as Gordon Ray's did), most residents know of the British from Indian history, not according to a social memory with a local narrative frame. This became clear in a debate about the legacy of the Raj among middle-class and wealthy Malik Sarai residents who talk in Hindi at a mill while the day slowly draws to a close around us.

ME: What impact did the Raj have in Chainpur itself?
KAILASH: The old can say, not me.
GYANENDRA: They built the middle school. We were against the British government. There was the provincial government and there were zamindars. The rest got nothing.
VISWA: The rest were *gulam* (slaves). They had a club over their heads.
ME: What happened in Chainpur itself?
KRISHNA: On the "mass level" it was hard.
VISWA: There was less corruption. [Debate ensues].
ALL: We were poor.
KAILASH: Economically, not just Chainpur, but all of India was weakened.
VISWA: They built the railways and we read and wrote the English language.
ME: What about religion?
KRISHNA: There was no conversion.

‡‡ The references to "Golden Sahib" by one and "Ray Sahib" by the other strongly indicate that both these elderly men refer to SDO Gordon M. Ray. There is reason to think he spent more time in the village's vicinity than other British officials. Despite his disdain for most of the region, Ray enjoyed the Kaimur Hills and Bakhtiyar Khan's mausoleum, so much so that he intended to take his unwelcome superior officer camping nearby in 1940, only a week or so before he looked forward to shaking "the dust of Bhabua from my feet for ever." Ray 1940. Entries for 25 April, October 31, November 8.

KAILASH: There were missions.

GYANENDRA: The Hindu-Muslim conflict began. Cows were thrown into temples and pigs into mosques.

VISWA: There was the divide-and-rule policy [he says in a mechanical manner as though repeating from rote memory].

ME: Here?

ALL: Yes. Chainpur. Everywhere.

ME: What happened here?

KAILASH: Nothing here.

VISWA: Nothing here.

JAI DEV: It happened in all places.

The dominance of a national narrative frame in regard to British rule reflects the efforts of the national and state governments to instantiate a memory of India's past that will both rally and bond its citizens. Evidence of this effort can be found in certain themes mentioned above that can be repeatedly heard among a variety of interlocutors. These include references to India as *gulam*, economic weakening, "divide and rule," and increased communalization as a result of British rule. Many residents describe India under the British as a *sona ciriya* (golden bird) that Britons' caged: all themes often repeated in the history classes of Chainpur's schools.

In a way, these proud narratives of India's struggles against the Raj represent the popularization of historiographical efforts to situate the subcontinent within a global history. While they understood that the details would entertain only fellow historians and archaeologists, many Britons and Indians labored in Chainpur during the Raj with an ideal of sharpening a bigger picture of India's past that would, in turn, fit into a singular, universal, historical narrative. Meanwhile, their contemporaries—both in South Asia and in Great Britain—sought to build educational institutions through which these unifying memories could be communicated to and established among the public. While many of the schools, museums, and exhibitions developed during the Raj sought to instantiate a global history of one humanity, the totalizing classification systems upon which they relied to communicate that story differentiated nations, races, and religions from one another. With the rise and ultimate success of South Asian independence movements, nationalist historians and archaeologists appropriated these universal frames and sought to situate India (and Pakistan) within "world history." Today, school history teachers, working from state-approved textbooks, frame the past around Bihari, Indian, and world events, with little room for more than a brief mention of Chainpur. The rising literacy rates in Bihar evidence the increasing success of universal education, and suggest heightened competition for memories of British rule in the local imaginary. Hence, locals—especially the more educated ones—primarily know about the Raj from within an historiographical frame of the nation, and about Salivahan, Harsu, and Bakhtiyar from within an oral narrative frame of Chainpur.

This bifurcation of historical knowledge becomes particularly evident among Chainpur residents who may have received high levels of education but have little local knowledge because they do not originate from the area. This is particularly the case among the women of Chainpur, since many if not most of them were raised in villages beyond the immediate area before marrying into a local family. A woman of such circumstances is Gayatri Devi, with whom I talk one day in her two-story home, as her teenage daughter enters to join us.

ME: Did the English come to this area?
GAYATRI: I don't know about before. I'm not knowledgeable.
ME: Did any English come to see Bakthiyar Khan's *roza* or the Mundeswari temple?
GAYATRI: I don't know that much. I don't know anything more than getting married, having children, and making food. My subject wasn't history, so my interest wasn't there. Mine was sociology.
ME: Did any missionaries come to this area?
GAYATRI: No, I don't know.

Despite her college degree and our familiarity with one another, Gayatri Devi appears narratively disconnected to Chainpur and withdrawn from the conversation. Many high-caste/*baradari* and upper-class women like her also have circumscribed lives due to purdah limits, which restrict women's access to the world outside their homes and the places associated with non-familial social memories.

The formal education available via government and private schools has introduced a model of historiography that leads a handful of college-educated residents to attempt and close this gap by writing their own histories of their village, while their readers assess their arguments and sources. For instance, during a conversation with the teachers at Chainpur's government high school, I ask about the connection between Raja Salivahan and Bakhtiyar Khan. One teacher repeatedly insists that according to *itihas* (history), the former was a zamindar, not a raja. Another teacher reiterates this point, discounting a claim connecting the two figures as published in *Harsu Brahm Prakash*, a thirty-page pamphlet sold at the temple. According to the teacher, then, this publication—which was written by a local Brahman and narrates an iteration of the raja-*brahm*-emperor story—does not count as history.

In separate endeavors, both a current and former resident of Chainpur are engaged in producing their own historiographic narratives of their village. The first researched the village while once employed in one of India's national libraries, finding the references made by William Crooke and Alexander Cunningham. Another, Tariq Badrat Shah, endeavors to write a history based on materials found in a variety of sources, most of which he cagily keeps secret from me in our conversation about his work. He, too, dismissed the *Harsu Brahm Prakash*, explaining "It's no use for history: it's a *dharmik*

book—'religious.'" While he has published a one-page Urdu essay in a government publication about the village, his history of Kaimur district has yet to find the blessings of a publisher. These efforts to craft narratives according to historiographical standards and discount those judged inadequate evidence the impact of forms of education not available to Chainpur residents a century ago, which promote scientistic paradigms of knowledge, even as they celebrate India's victorious expulsion of its British occupiers.

Whether it is due to a similar dynamic of epistemic hegemony or some other reason, there appears to have been a disappearance of at least one form of past narrativization: that of the (*bhat*) bard. When Buchanan heard that a family in the near distant village of Bhagwanpur claimed descent from Raja Salivahan (through his daughter who escaped the *brahm*'s wrath), he checked the genealogy with several *bhat*s. Since then, the local institution appears to have evaporated, for, during my research years in Chainpur, nobody but one person has responded affirmatively to my queries as to whether or not any *bhat*s or their works survive. When discussing the village's past, Tariq Badrat Shah generously showed me a *kursinama* (family tree) published in the *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* in 1968. A former commissioner of Patna division collected the narrative during one of his tours of the subdivision, when he met "the late Shri Madho Rai, alias Nazir Ahmad, of Bhabua." Rai/Ahmad claimed to have had *bhat* ancestors and narrated the *kursinama* from memory. Although not "based on a scientific assessment of historical details," his interlocutor published the narrative in order to prompt others to examine similar texts that "when properly analysed are, however, bound to throw some light on a few obscure points."[6]

A mix of old Hindi poetry and modern prose,[7] the *kursinama* traces a Rajput family's migration from Fatehpur Sikri to Chainpur, paralleling the same origination and genealogy Buchanan records for the Bhagwanpur family. It appears to graft various narratives within a single frame. Following exhortations to the goddess Amba, the text begins with King Ambhi of Taxila's struggle against Alexander's invading armies before describing the king's war on a demon's (*danav*) forces. After telling about Babar's aborted attack on Sikri, the narrative follows Lakshmi Mal's conquest of Chainpur, his establishment of a Sikarwar Rajput lineage, and his grant of villages to Harsu Pandit, his royal priest. The *kursinama* explains that the conquest was occasioned when Mund, the son of Chainpur's former ruler, sacrificed Harsu's son to the goddess Mundesvari at her temple, and Lakshmi Mal attacked in retaliation. A later raja, Sharivshah, continues the relationship with Harsu, who negotiates the raja's second marriage due to the barrenness of the rani. The "Mogal Pathan" Nawab Vali Bakhtiyar Khan attacks and displaces Sharivshah, whose son temporarily receives back Chainpur upon petitioning Akbar. The narrative later moves into a long prose section that describes Nawab Bakhtiyar Khan Khilji's assault on a Chainpur ruled by Sarivahan Shah (Samvat 1420) upon Harshu Brahm's martyrdom. After commenting on Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, the *kursinama* explains how *sadar* (chief) governor Hastings appropriated the lands of rulers who did not pay the taxes he levied.[8]

No one else in the village appears to know about this *kursinama*, which Tariq Badrat Shah was in the midst of translating when he made a photocopy of it for me. It remains unclear from when the narrative originates, especially since Rai/Ahmad's interventions in the text demonstrate his efforts to speak to contemporary audiences. For instance, he includes a comment that the Congress government has built a road to a mountain that the narrative mentions. Perhaps more telling is the appearance in the text's middle of a cross-reference for a narrative detail to a contemporary published work, complete with edition and page number. Perhaps other local *bhat* traditions made similar efforts to remain current, but their fate is clear. While some older Chainpur area residents remembered *kursinama*s or *vamshavali* narratives and genealogies, most noted their disappearance, often ascribed to a younger generation's disinterest. For instance, in 1995, Waliuddin Khan explained how his father's generation maintained a genealogical map on a large piece of paper that traced the dual heritage of the Naughara Pathan family and the Malik Sarai Rajput family back to the two brothers Bhagwan Singh and Jai Ram Singh. However, he explained, it was now forgotten. For most residents, the terms *kursinama* and *vamshavali* refer only to their personal ability to trace their lineage back two or three generations, which is as far as the memories of most of them allows. Only one family could point to an existing text. The family of a once-prominent Sufi healer and teacher keeps the *kursinama* he wrote shut in their home's library across from the bulbous-domed tomb of their grandfather. The most likely family member to consult it now runs a pharmacy in Saudi Arabia.

While the local *kursinama* narrative traditions may have been eclipsed, museums as a site for projecting narratives and visions of the past are on the ascent. Chainpur residents live in an independent India whose national and state governments not only continue to fund the same scientific survey departments established under British rule (such as the Archaeological Survey of India), but also support a widening array of public museums. Some residents have traveled as far as the Indian Museum in Kolkata where they can view an inscription removed from the neighboring Mundeswari temple, as described in chapter 7. Closer, their state government maintains the Patna Museum where, if they can afford the trip, they can view their region as portrayed in the works of Thomas and William Daniell. As already mentioned in the introduction, a few years ago, as I stood in a gallery there exhibiting prints made by these British artists, I engaged a couple in conversation after noticing their young daughter recognize the artists' depiction of the Mundeswari temple because of the family's visits there. On the wall nearby, an introduction to the gallery in Hindi described how the uncle-nephew team traversed British India. It explained, in part, "There has always been an insistence of cultivated people to live in excellence and modernity. For this reason, from the 18th century, cultivated Indians began to be influenced by Western knowledge of different sorts. Consequently, Indian artistic painting and architectural art did not advance."

Three facets of this afternoon encounter demonstrate the significant impact that Western representations of South Asia have had on Indian understandings of the

subcontinent. First, the child's easy recognition of the Mundeswari temple in the Daniell image was made possible in part by the ASI's preservation of it. Second, the inscription's association of the Daniells' work with "excellence," "modernity," and "Western knowledge" reflects the scientistic authority some contemporary Indians ascribe to these Britons' productions. Third, the ability of the museum to attract this young family and engage the wandering girl demonstrates the continued popularity of this form of public exhibition, eight decades since its opening.

The success of the museum as a "university for the masses" is further reflected on the mountainous road leading to Mundeswari (see Illustration 8.3), where the temple has had its own museum since 1997 (see Illustration 8.4). In its two display rooms, artifacts labeled with Hindi explanations demonstrate the artistic splendor and religious importance long ascribed to the temple. Along the walls of one room, the museum curators have hung photographs of artifacts in other museums, inviting Indian visitors to envision a network of archeological institutions dedicated to the scientific preservation, interpretation, and presentation of their nation's past. Unstated in the museum, but demonstrating both the continuing impetus to preserve the past in place and the complex relationship of the secular government with Bihar's religious history, the Bihar State Board of Religious Trusts submitted a proposal to the ASI in 2008 to renovate and restore the temple.[9]

Recently as well, the ASI returned for a multi-year renovation of Bakhtiyar's mausoleum (see Illustration 8.5). Some Chainpur residents—educated to respect the authority of archaeology and the ASI, of science and scientists—wait in anticipation for a new sign to be erected to help resolve the growing debate as to who is buried in Bakhtiyar's tomb:

ILLUSTRATION 8.3. Mundeswari temple. 2009.

ILUSTRATION 8.4. Mundeswari temple museum. 2009.

Bakhtiyar Khan or Bakhtiyar Khilji. While some will rely on the ASI's sign to lend scientific weight to their replies, fewer will recognize how this dynamic repeats their ancestors' appropriation of scientism through which the ASI's intervention under British supervision initially destabilized their answers about the past and undermined their

ILLUSTRATION 8.5. Repairing the dome of Bakhtiyar Khan's tomb. 2009.

authority over at least some of their own worldviews. While references to local relics have not found their way into the state's schoolbooks, when Chainpur's teachers make occasional reference to the *roza*, they almost certainly will shape their comments relative to what the new sign reads.

## EDUCATION

Six teachers and I sit in the moderate comfort of the Chainpur high school's office at the beginning of the school day. The teacups in our hands help us warm ourselves against the winter chill as the dim sun slowly burns through the gray morning haze. I ask if there had been any English in this area.

TEACHER 1: None lived here.
TEACHER 2: Not in Chainpur.
TEACHER 1: Old men can say.
TEACHER 3: Ram Karan Singh could.
TEACHER 1: As far as I understand it, there weren't. [He tries to suggest something else but is drowned out by the others.]
TEACHER 5: Next to the river is an indigo factory.
TEACHER 1: Next to the *roza*.
ME: Were there any missionaries here during the English empire?
TEACHER 5: There was a *baghica* (small garden).
ME: Was there much impact from this?
TEACHER 5: Development occurred.
ME: What development?
TEACHER 5: *Vijyan* (science).
TEACHER 4: Before the English, people didn't know the history.
TEACHER 1: It was about religion then. They knew about Hindu *dharm* or Muslim *dharm*. But after the English Raj, development occurred. People learned certain work.
ME: [Turning to Teacher 4] Can you say what you said again?
TEACHER 4: It was *dharmik shiksha* (religious instruction) before. Then, during the Raj, they built schools.

The conversation demonstrates how scientism infuses the lives of contemporary Chainpur residents far more pervasively than it likely did their ancestors. It no longer lurks on the horizon of their lives through distant institutions like Benares Hindu University and the Patna Museum as it did their forefathers and mothers, but finds daily expression in and around the village. While elites continue to have the most exposure to its ideology, less privileged villagers are not isolated. Education provides one of the pri-

mary conduits for the communication of scientism, as suggested in the teachers' conversation in which at least three of the six associate the British with the arrival of *vijnan*, history, and development, while one characterizes all pre-British, local education as only religious. Today, more of Chainpur's children attend schools than they did two decades ago.

Before examining how contemporary education communicates scientism and religious themes, it is worth noting how frequently Chainpur residents connect the success of the Raj with British knowledge. The embarrassment of foreign domination remains palpable for a great proportion of the village's residents for whom nationalist pride runs deeply. They grapple with it in terms of relative intellectual abilities in two ways. On the one hand, many echo the teachers' sentiments and explain that superior British knowledge made India's conquest possible. As one young resident put it, India was weak and not very *jyankari* (knowledgeable). Others recognize that Indians had knowledge, but not the kind that leads to *vikas* or *taraqqi* (development). Repeating the sentiments from his colleagues across the field that separates their schools, a middle school teacher later explains that before the British arrived, there were only *patshala*s (Sanskrit-medium schools) and madrasas. But the British built the school in which he now teaches history, science, and English. Another young man drew the connection more clearly, "In the time of the English there were few schools and colleges. So then when people got educated, they got independence."

Alternatively, other Chainpur residents explain British success as the result of their mining India for its knowledge, which they then turned against its originators. In an extension of the *sona ciriya* (golden bird) image, India represented (and represents) a target not only of wealth, but of knowledge for foreigners. Pointing to technological accomplishments mentioned in ancient texts, such as the purported aircraft in which Ravan abducted Sita in the *Ramayan* or Lakshmi's cloning of herself to create Ganesh, proponents of this view claim that the West has erroneously credited itself with the origination for many modern scientific accomplishments that, in fact, derive from India. Whatever their view on the state of science in pre-British South Asia, most locals agree that education is the key to development, and that development is a good thing.

During visits to Chainpur's government schools and half-dozen private schools, the themes of *vijnan* and *vikas/turaqqi* arise repeatedly in classrooms. For instance, at one of the village's oldest private schools, a teacher consistently mentions science and development in his lesson on the Renaissance (*Punarjagarna*). While a brick-and-concrete building contains some of the school's classrooms, this ninth-standard history class occurs in one of a dozen or so classrooms clustered around a courtyard where the children begin each school day in assembly. Wearing red and white *shalwar-kamiz* and shirt-pant uniforms, the twenty-four girls and thirteen boys crowd onto the wooden benches below the classroom's tile-covered roof. The slightly built teacher reads from and expounds on the textbook, mentioning Kepler, Copernicus, and Newton. But as the

students' attention slowly wanes and their eyes increasingly wander, he expertly shifts into a more interactive mode, posing questions about recent history while retouching on the themes of the day. "So what happened with Japan?" he queries before answering his own question. "They moved forward. They studied *videshi ki vijnan* (the science of the foreigners) and advanced." Perhaps as a consequence of my presence, he extends his extemporaneous lecture to discuss advancements in America and the poverty among "we people" (Indians) before veering back to the treaty of Versailles and Hitler's rise to power. Not all teaching on development follows this teacher's India-deprecating lead, and other instructors and textbooks emphasize India's proud advances. In another school, a teacher talks to his fourth-standard social science class about "our system of transport." He declares, *Hamara Bharat itina vikasit hai* ("Our Bharat is so developed") that there are streets in all four directions and roads go to all villages. He carefully notes that emperor Ashok laid the Grand Trunk highway from Kolkata to Amritsar, Sher Shah Suri repaired it, and Lord Dalhousie made it more established in 1850.

In the minds of the teachers, the potential impact of the education is not limited to political and economic development. While I talk with Qutbuddin, a tall, twenty-something year old man wearing a buttoned shirt and pants who teaches at the same private school, he presumes I am married and asks why I have not brought my wife to Chainpur.

ME: But you haven't brought yours here [pointing to the school grounds] either.

QUTBUDDIN: But you're from a *vikasit mulk* (developed country) where people have everything available. But where people are illiterate, it's a shameful thing. In Bharat it's a *parampara* (tradition) that women shouldn't stand in front of men.

ME: Will that change here?

QUTBUDDIN: If women will become more educated, this will be possible. But so long as they are uneducated, *that* won't happen.

Qutbuddin, therefore, shares the sentiments of those British administrators who promoted "modern" education in anticipation for the social changes it would initiate, hence justifying its cost. Manifesting the moral instruction these officials also sought to promote, moral jingoes in Hindi and English greet the children on the walls outside most of their classrooms in this and many other schools. *Parisram kabhi vyarth nahin jata*/"Labour never goes invain" [*sic*] reads one.

The school children who learn in Chainpur's classrooms today imbibe the scientistic themes of science, rationalism, and disciplinarity that evolved at the same time the British government initiated public education in Bihar. In 2008, a new state government revived efforts to maximize student enrollments and education quality when it initiated an ambitious scheme to address the impoverished school system that has long discouraged students with few classrooms and fewer teachers. As Chainpur's public schools invite more students with the promise of universal education, its half-dozen private schools provide

ILLUSTRATION 8.6. Khalil Khan teaching class in a private school. 2009.

more consistent teaching with higher teacher attendance (see Illustration 8.6). Whether government or private, most schools follow the state-set curricula that begins studies of *vijnan* as early as grade three. Children read books like *Vijnan ki Khoj* (Investigations in Science) and *Ao Vijnan Sikhen*—a title that cheerfully enthuses, "Come On, Let's Study Science."

The impact of this initiative is particularly prominent in Jagariya, a satellite village north of Chainpur. In 1995, the village's sole primary school had two buildings. However, one stood empty, the floors sagging due to inadequate foundations and a blackboard rendered nearly useless by the whitewash carelessly applied to the walls. Two teachers taught five classes between them in the two rooms of the remaining building, with only one chair and bench in each room. The noise from the fifty or more students who might attend the classroom for standards one and two could rise to a deafening cacophony. By 2009, the new state government initiative had transformed the school, providing new, well-constructed classrooms and increasing to eight the faculty from the four it had in 2006. Poverty remains a major obstacle in the fulfillment of the universal-education ideal since many families cannot afford to part with the income that their children's labor provides. Hence, the schoolmaster explained, the government now offers student scholarships, which helps encourage families to send their daughters and sons to study courses in science, math, social studies, environmental science, Sanskrit, Hindi, English, and moral science.

Along with the greater number of teachers assigned to government schools and the greater percentage of instructors actually showing up than was the case fifteen years ago,

ILLUSTRATION 8.7. Temples near Harsu Brahm temple. 2009.

teachers have a more specialized focus in the classroom.[§§] Alok Kumar teaches math, physics, and biology in Chainpur's middle school, which has also expanded with a new building. Why does he consider these topics important? "To get a job. There are so many jobs in science: software engineering, computer engineering." Meanwhile, the government plans on adding student laboratories (*prayogshala*) to the high school that, in the words of one teacher, will promote practical knowledge. However, some Chainpur residents complain that many of the new specialist teachers are inadequately trained. Indeed, one young science teacher explained—as she toted her toddler around to her classes—that she had no special training in the subject. Nevertheless, she teaches environmental science to standard three, botany to standard four, and climate to standard five.

Similar dynamics are at play among the mushrooming numbers of private schools in Chainpur. While the government schools expand their classroom space and enrollment lists, the number of private schools has increased sixfold from the one existing in 1990. The newest school stands atop the fort on land owned by Harsu Brahm's temple (see Illustration 8.7) and was established under the auspices of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteers Association). The schoolmaster explains that the school mainly attempts *bharat sanatan sanskriti aur parampara shikshat dena* ("to give an education in India's eternal culture and traditions"). Which culture and traditions this entails is immediately apparent during the school's daily opening service in which stu-

[§§] Indeed, some kilometers to the west of Chainpur a large, recently constructed training facility prepares a new generation of teachers as part of the new government's educational initiative.

dents gather and teachers venerate images of Saraswati (Hindu goddess of learning), *Bharat Ma* (Mother India), and Harsu Brahm's *murti* (see Illustration 8.8). Then two students mark each teacher with a sandalwood-paste *tika* on his or her forehead. Whereas the classrooms and offices of government schools hold pictures of Mohandas Gandhi, Jawalharlal Nehru, B. R. Ambedkar, and Abul Kalam Azad (demonstrating how nationalist historical narratives eclipse local or even Bihari ones), the RSS school features images of the Hindu deities Shiv, Parvati, Ganesh, Krishna, and Lakshmi as well as the Hindu nationalists Keshav Baliram Hedgewar and Madhav Sadashiv Golwalker. Despite the obvious emphasis on Hindu religion, the schoolmaster views math and science as the school's primary academic focus. He explains that the school strives for a balance between the *adhunik* (modern) and *puranik* (ancient). Meanwhile, Prem Chaudhari, a local benefactor of the school, approvingly describes how all the teachers specialize in the subjects they taught, so there was *alag-alag shiksha hai* (separate instruction).

Not all education programs in Chainpur have fastened onto the specialized instruction of sciences and other subjects. While the village's main madrasa has expanded tremendously in size and purpose since my first visit in 1994, its emphasis remains the same. What had once been an open space where children sat beneath a thatched roof reciting from their Qurans under the attentive gaze of two teachers, has now become an expansive, two-story building that provides a hostel for seventy-five students and classrooms for its four teachers (see Illustration 8.9). When asked what the madrasa taught, one teacher answers straightforwardly: *mazhab* (religion). Another teacher, a *hafiz* (someone who has memorized the Quran), adds that Urdu, Hindi, English, Arabic, and Farsi also are taught. Later, the first teacher explains that when the British left, *turaqqi hua* ("development happened"). When I ask whether or not development occurred under the British, he and the *hafiz* reply that there were very few madrasas during that time, and only in the cities.

ILLUSTRATION 8.8. Garlanded images of AUM, Harsu Brahm's *murti*, and Mother India. 2009.

ILLUSTRATION 8.9. Courtyard of Chainpur's large madrasa. 2009.

These teachers, and perhaps also the benefactors who contribute to the madrasa's continued expansion, clearly view development in terms quite apart from the economic and scientistic models most common among their neighbors.

Despite the importance of schools in the spread of scientism among local residents, the extension to Chainpur of a rapidly expanding and deepening news and entertainment network means that homes and tea stalls have joined classrooms as sites of conversations that reaffirm, deepen, and question Western-originated science's presumed authority. When the news sensation of a stone Ganesh *murti* (statue) that purportedly drank milk swept India in 1995, Chainpur residents read in their newspapers about efforts by the Ministry of Science and Technology to determine a physical explanation. At the time, one eighth-grade history teacher asked his class, "Is it possible for a Ganesh *murti* to drink milk?" "No!" cried many of the students. Approvingly, he then mentioned Max Müller and his sober-minded study of India's past. Although many Chainpur residents believed in the miracle despite the scientific doubts some raised, the fact that a government ministry weighed in on the controversy demonstrates the faith many Indians hold in both their scientists and their deities. Meanwhile, Chainpur residents not uncommonly refer to Max Müller and how he helped clarify India's history through philology and the history of religion, as they read in their school days when they learned that understanding science was incumbent on every citizen. While to many scholars today Müller represents scholastic oversimplification of South Asian religions, for many Chainpur residents he offered scientific vindication of their traditions. In 1995, as I sat with Ram Karan Singh and Upagrah Singh drinking tea in our favorite tea stall, the latter—the founder of one of

Chainpur's private schools—comments, "An economics professor in Gujarat says that we should not copy the West. Max Müller thought that the Rg Ved, et cetera, *sab se maha-granth hain* (were the greatest of great books)."

## SCHOLARS

The legacy of British knowledge projects in Chainpur also becomes apparent in local responses to scholars and their representations of the village and its inhabitants. Although historians alone appear to have made repeated mention of Chainpur in post-independence Indian scholarship—especially in the massive, six-part *Comprehensive History of Bihar* (1974–1987)—Chainpur residents very rarely mention their work in conversations. Meanwhile, at least six foreign academics have come to Chainpur in the past three decades—including an anthropologist, a South Asian area specialist, two art historians, and two historians of religions—all of whom have been American. Reflective of its increasingly global political, military, and economic interests following its postwar rise as a superpower, the United States has overcome its relatively slim historical connection to India and become the home of a large academic community dedicated to the subcontinent. Like many of the Britons before them, most of the American scholars visiting Chainpur arrived specifically to study either its Suri period architecture or the devotions to Harsu Brahm, while relying in part on British-era scholarship.*** Since an investigation into the legacy of pre-independence representations of Chainpur among its twenty-first century residents would be incomplete without considering their encounters with scholars after independence, we must necessarily, albeit uncomfortably, turn to the scholarship on Chainpur that I observed residents discuss the most: my own.

As I am walking to Chainpur one morning, a man in a *lungi* (a long, waist-wrapped cloth) calls me over in order to invite me to tea with another three men also in *lungi*s. The teashop owner, wearing a long white beard and linen cap, carefully allots the steaming tea glasses of mud-brown tea. The man who hailed me comments that people say that they will be beaten because I take notes about this and that. I ask why they think so, and the shop owner replies that India was once enslaved and after I finish my writing it will be enslaved again. I repeat my question and he deflects it by saying that people like being enslaved. During English rule, there was no thievery or crime. "People want peace of mind, isn't that so?" he says.

This interaction occurs upon my return to Chainpur after a previous visit when I distributed copies of my first book about the village and its neighbors. So it is perhaps not serendipitous that later in the day, a similar experience occurs among the teachers of the

*** The two most recent foreign scholarly visitors—my collaborator, Mathew N. Schmalz, and I—reflect an academic countertrend to the increasing specialization among some social sciences. Despite identifying as historians of religions, we have not focused entirely on religious phenomena, preferring to contextualize religious practices, beliefs, and identities within larger social, historical, and cultural settings.

government middle school. Dressed in a mix of buttoned shirts, *kurtas*, pants, and *dhotis*, they sit as a cluster in the cavernous office, watching my computer's screen. I am demonstrating a downloaded version of the online site that my collaborator Mathew N. Schmalz and I have created allowing users to virtually navigate some of Chainpur's streets, shops, and homes. One of the teachers, Ramchandra Singh, declares that people say I come to the area to make everyone *gulam* (slaves), just like the British came there and made everyone *gulam*. But, Ramchandra adds, he tells them this is not so. I ask this teacher why people fear my work and he replies that just as the English came before, so the English will come again. Later, while we sit outside Ramchandra's house enjoying tea, I ask him again why people might think my research dangerous to them. "Those who aren't educated think so. It's *suni sunai* (hearsay). The *am log* (regular people) think that. But people like Dilip and Sunil (friends of mine) explain that it's not like that. You ask questions because you want to know about this. It isn't your country."

Although these interlocutors could not point to specific instances when my work proved harmful, the inhibitions they voice on behalf of themselves or others (or, more likely, both) demonstrates a certain reverberation from British efforts to know India, if not Chainpur. Certainly, my identity as an American does nothing to assuage concerns, given that my nation arose to superpower status as Britain's strength waned. The hungry local consumption of printed and broadcast, if not yet digital, news ensures that residents know how the United States projects its economic, political, and military power to secure its national interests the world over. This has included American intelligence agents operating in South Asia, often in league with India's archenemy, Pakistan. The image garnered from these sources, although not wholly negative, coincides somewhat with the social memories of the Raj instilled through schools, published histories, comic books, films, and television. Suspicion can only be expected in regard to a foreigner who chooses a village far away from the usual haunts of Westerners (like Benares or Bodh Gaya), asks lots of questions, takes photographs, and makes other recordings. One woman rushed out of her home as I stood in her neighborhood completing a map during my original fourteen months of research. She accused me of sending the map to the Pakistani intelligence service so Pathans could invade from Nepal. Although explanation and good humor dispelled the suspicions she and any of the crowd who gathered might have held, these concerns suggest an expression of the lesson learned in many classrooms regarding British domination: knowledge begets power, and foreign power can mean foreign domination. As one private school teacher put it in his twist on a conversation with other faculty about the British Raj, "We people are *desh bhakt* (patriots). What happened in Iraq won't happen here. We will fight."

Visits to Chainpur after the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated how deeply these events have charged the perception of my work, especially among Muslims and particularly in regard to Iraq. In 2005, one Muslim storeowner, with whom I have had a warm relationship for a decade, calls me over as I pass by and starts a conversation about Iraq and the United States. A crowd ebbs and flows as we carry on. After a while, I attempt to turn the topic toward my research interests.

ME: What is the meaning of *mazhab*?

UMAR SHAH: It means like Bush having a foreign policy that is against Muslims.

ME: What's the difference between *mazhab* and *religion*?

UMAR SHAH: *Mazhab* is in the whole world at war. *Mazhab* won't end in the world. You saw at Baqr Id how many cut the throats [draws his finger repeatedly against my throat] of goats and ate it? That's *mazhab*.

ME: What is *religion*?

UMAR SHAH: It's the same.

ME: What is the meaning of *dharm*?

UMAR SHAH: It's the same. In Hindi it's *dharm*. Bush is on a crusade, a crusade against the whole world.

ME: What is *din*?

UMAR SHAH: *Din* is the same as *dharm*.

Despite years of mutual regard and many interviews and other conversations, Umar Shah interjects his anger toward me as an American throughout this part of our engagement, resisting the direction of discussion that I struggle to prompt. While the topic of British rule did not figure into his comments, one cannot help imagining that its prominence in his formal education must inform his thoughts and feelings to some degree. Comments that the United States wanted to rule the world like Britain more obviously demonstrated that other residents explicitly make the connection.

While not amounting to the Pakistani or CIA subterfuge feared by some, my scholarship nevertheless has had local consequences. This could not have been more apparent than when I visited with one community in Chainpur with which I have had a long-standing relationship. While speaking with Karna, the person in his neighborhood with whom I have spoken most, he became quite agitated and asked what my book had said about him. Members of another group had mistakenly associated him with someone else's comments about them and had confronted Karna in a manner that he considered threatening. When I translate into Hindi for him and his neighbors what I had written, Karna becomes reassured and says that what I had written was correct. Meanwhile, members of the criticized group also took me to task for writing what others had said about them, though their demeanor did not hold the menace Karna sensed.

Focusing on these criticisms, suspicions, and consequences perhaps exaggerates their pervasiveness. Such vocalizations of suspicion are rare (this, of course, does not mean Chainpur residents do not criticize my work outside my hearing). Karna and his community's members continue to allow me to document their perspectives, as do most members of the group who had taken exception to what I recorded. Iraq no longer rules my conversations with Umar Shah. While some opt out of talking with me—often through polite circumventions, like perpetually postponed meetings—my continued ethnographic research in Chainpur would be impossible without broad cooperation among residents. In fact, others have criticized me for not being included. For instance,

on my first full day back in Chainpur after distributing my book, a resident of Jagariya, the satellite village where I stay, asked me why I included no pictures of that village in my book. I explained that there was one of the home where I reside. Only assuaged when he reexamined the book, he nevertheless insisted, when our paths crossed again some days later, that there should have been more images of Jagariya. Another resident complained that my collaborator and I had omitted the same village from our online project. Meanwhile, one of the priests at the Harsu Brahm temple criticized my decision to call the *brahm* by a pseudonym in my first book instead of using his real name.

While some have resisted participation in my projects, a few veer to the extreme of imagining me a definitive authority on Chainpur. In 1995, during my original fieldwork, I brought a copy of the Daniells' image of the supposed *idgah* to show residents. Nobody seemed to have seen it before. In the middle of a conversation with Shantu Singh, a local teacher who was explaining how he had been instructed in and read about the history he teaches today, he suddenly demanded to know the title of the Daniell image. "You must translate for us whatever you find about the history of Chainpur! How else will we know about it?" Needless to say, I was flustered by this exclamation, given that I had come to the area in order to learn about local ways of knowing the past, not to be privileged as an authority on that past.

Shahzad Bashir, a scholar of Pakistani origin who now lives and works in the United States, while reflecting on his own work among Nurbakhshi communities in Pakistan, characterized the reception of Western scholars there in ways quite appropriate to conditions in Chainpur. "Pakistan's colonial legacy and an appreciation for the general hegemonic role of Western powers and ideals in the world today can make Nurbakhshis and others in Pakistan quite automatically see Western (more specifically, white) researchers as bearers of authority. Such researchers can usually gain access to materials and communities more easily than would be possible for a person of South Asian origin, and their foreignness can also be an asset since they are perceived as being disinterested, but powerful, observers whose presence can be overlooked because of their perceived separation from the local scene."[10] The experiences mentioned above suggest that some Chainpur residents held similarly exaggerated impressions of me.

While a few credited the foreign scholar with undue authority, at least one Chainpur resident sought to manipulate this impression for the sake of his vested interests, a dynamic that Bashir also describes in the context of his work. Ravan Tiwari makes a point of bringing up the subject of a copper-plate inscription while I casually talk with him and his cousin in his home. It was the sort of thing, Ravan says, that rajas wrote and then buried for safekeeping. He claims to know that another Chainpur resident has one in his possession, and that it records that a raja constructed a building—now serving as a Muslim building—to serve as a temple. When he and I carry our conversation to the porch of another family's house, Ravan drops his voice to a conspiratorial whisper in order to tell me that, in fact, the inscription actually proves that a different, more important Muslim building in a near distant village was built as a temple, but that he needs me

to translate it so he can be certain. Whether Ravan sought to exploit the authoritative capital with which he thought some endowed me or he enjoyed alarming me at the prospect of a communal conflict developing around the familiar threatening claim of a Muslim building originating as a Hindu temple, he clearly thought that giving me this information would benefit him. Throughout our relationship, he has enjoyed creating false crises of conscience for me regarding my presence and work in Chainpur. As either an authority or a laughing-stock, I have served his interests. In this regard, the ghosts of British hegemony do not seem to haunt Ravan, who manages the situation almost entirely on his own terms.

## CONCLUSION

The legacy of British cartography, classification, and scientism remains more than evident in post-independence India. Chainpur's school children learn their nation's geography with textbook maps using nearly the same frame and graticule as Rennell's. The village's district administrators rely on maps produced by the Survey of India, all of which accord with the cartographic tradition inculcated by the British. Chainpur's local administrators use the most recent census data to evaluate the relative populations of the area's Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians. And Chainpur's Hindu nationalists hang images of a new Mother India in their homes and shops as part of their effort to agitate for an essential Hindu character that homogenizes the space within India's borders that she fills. According to many of them, Muslims and Christians, who deny their inherent Hindu nature, disqualify themselves from Indian citizenship. Nevertheless, these legacies of British rule do not represent a complete break from the epistemes existing before their arrival. For instance, lawsuits over land ownership may continue to rely on the British-established system of land records, but these derived directly from Mughal- and Suri-era models.

With the few indigenous sources we have from before the nineteenth century, we cannot determine the full environment of group identities by which Chainpur denizens understood themselves and one another. While the sole existent *kursinama* gives a glimpse into some identity structures—for instance, despite antagonistic portrayals of some Mughals, they are not religiously characterized—our inability to date it leaves the lacuna intact. Did the communal classifications and comparisons current today have a parallel in Chainpur's past? We do not know. However, based on historical dynamics in the rest of South Asia, it seems reasonable to conclude that some communal formulations and their epistemic legitimations and representations resulted in no small part as a result of British contact. As I talk with Premchand Chaurasia about the RSS school that he supports, I ask whether he agrees with many RSS members that to live in India one has to embrace a Hindu identity, no matter one's religious identity. He agrees, noting that "Hindu" was part of "Hindustan," so the two were essentially related. However, he adds,

an Indian could follow *Sanatan dharm*, or be Muslim or Christian. This insistence on collapsing national and religious/cultural identity in the promotion of an essentialized, exclusive category of belonging suggests the legacy of the Raj's classification techniques, even as it is inflected with complicated categorical claims that reflect Indians' century-long struggle with competing, indigenous nationalisms and secularisms. Today's Chainpur residents resist, accept, and debate the imperial past as its scientistic, disciplinary, classificatory, and religious legacies—forged in intimate and distant engagements between Indians and Britons—remain evident in their lives.

> In Bombay both Hinduism and, in a lesser extent, Islam, suffer a certain drain caused by the existence of a number of sects, whose religious principles derive from the precepts of both religions . . . The Nayitas of Malwa share in equal degree the Muslim and Hindu religious beliefs. Worshipping Ganesh as well as Allah, using Hindu names and dress and observing Hindu festivals. The Hissarhi Brahmans . . . are more or less converted to Islam in faith but retain Brahmanical practices and claim to eat only with the Sayyids among the Muslims. The Malkanas of the United Provinces are another somewhat similar group of Rajput, Jat and Bania origin observing both Hindu and Muslim ceremonies.
>
> —T. C. HODSON 1937, 82.

# Conclusion

MANY IF NOT most of the British and Indian authors whom we have considered recorded examples of category-defying behavior and beliefs, sometimes explicitly denying the ability to establish fixed, self-apparent divisions between Hindus and Muslims, castes and *baradari*s, and races. Yet most, in the end, did exactly that.

If so many officials, travellers, and others with district experience understood the subtleties of everyday religiosity, the mutability of caste/*baradari*, and the fictions of distinct racial categories, why did official and unofficial publications tend to rely so heavily on reified concepts of religion, caste, and race? One answer is instrumentalist: the British government pursued a divide-and-rule policy. Yet, the debates in both official correspondence and publications undermine conspiratorial theses. Had Britons all pledged to undermine Indian unity through the persistent emphasis on communal difference, they would not have spent so much of their time arguing over the categories and their relevance. A more convincing answer to the question resides in the persuasive power of the scientistic paradigm—with the authoritative power it granted to those who conformed to scientific discourse and taxonomy—that served as the inspiration for many of these men, British and Indian alike. They may have disagreed over where the boundaries fell, but they remained committed to establishing distinct divisions in order to abide by scientistic expectations, a move reaffirmed by Christian categorical definitiveness. Their persistent valuation of enumerations, reports, surveys, and images as scientific

repeatedly affirmed the hegemonic appeal of the science-like and the implicit suspicion of the unscientific.

It is only fair to wonder whether the recognition—on the part of many officials, at least—of the arbitrariness and oversimplification of religious classification only shows that these men and women never presumed that the communal distinctions they described were as concrete as they suggested. Perhaps this only served as shorthand for a more complicated reality that they appreciated. Jonathan Z. Smith has famously taken Alfred Korzybski's adage "Map is not territory" and added an important caveat: "but maps are all we possess."[1] True enough. We cannot have expected British-era authors to have attempted the impossible task of creating a 1:1 scale representation of Chainpur's social landscape. However, when the user confuses the map for the territory (the signifier for the signified), when he navigates the social terrain under the assumption that the features on his map bear more than emblematic resemblance to actual social features, and when he promotes the map to others as an objective representation that should supplant the subjective self-presentations of those who live on the actual territory, then the authority of the map can supplant the impulse to experience the landscape. Hence, Smith forgets that while territory does not care what it is labeled or how it is represented, humans do. Moreover, when coupled to the powers—both persuasive and coercive—of the state, classification regimens can alter the on-the-ground realities they presumably represent. In other words, the map not only is confused for the terrain, it changes the landscape. It has been this book's endeavor to demonstrate how this dynamic unfolded in British India for both Britons and Indians.

For a work concerned with the centrality of religion in developing disciplines within British India, it may appear odd that the academic study of religion has not been considered in these pages in more depth than cartography, ethnography, demographics, folklore studies, ethnology, archaeology, and anthropology. Explaining that this is so because none of the artists, surveyors, authors, or enumerators who came to Chainpur during the Raj arrived with religious studies as their primary intent might suggest the absurdity of taking Chainpur as this study's focus in the first place. The opposite is true. The fact that religion features so prominently in British and Indian representations that *are not* the work of religion specialists makes the salience of religion as an analytic category in the overall British episteme all the more apparent. Those who wrote nonconfessional, specialized works on Indian religions, like Max Weber, Monier Monier-Williams, and William Crooke, usually relied on the observations made by merchants, missionaries, soldiers, and officials during their everyday lives. That these amateurs served as sources demonstrates how much attention they gave to religion when depicting Indian cultures, in large part because it served as their central categorical frame. Hence Crooke, who also drew from his own experiences among rural Indians, both sought the anecdotes that he knew peppered officials' filed-yet-forgotten reports and

relied upon Indians like Khairat Ali, who sent him an iteration of the Harsu Brahm narration. Although we could trace the development of nontheological religious studies during the imperial era, this would take us too far afield from Chainpur and is, in the end, unnecessary.

Our focus on the representations of a set of villages demonstrates the breadth of disciplinary interest that took religion as a primary category of analysis and traces the capillary action that wicked "on the spot" "local knowledge" into the larger, more popular arteries of knowledge transference regarding India and Indians. If proof is needed of the import of religion in the disciplines considered, and their impact on the discipline of comparative religious studies, it can certainly be found in the fact that of the six scholars known to have visited Chainpur in the post-independence era, four out of six took religious phenomena as their primary aim of study. Meanwhile, all six had been trained in a specific discipline, demonstrating the gradual triumph of specialized, disciplinary knowledge over the broad-minded amateur.

Census officials H. H. Risley and E. A. Gait's claim in 1903, mentioned in chapter 5, that the acceptance of the neologism *Animism* demonstrated the superior authority granted to the "skilled observer" over the mere traveller suggests an important outcome of the growing prominence of disciplines. That these census officials deferred to anthropologist E. B. Tylor—who originated the notion of Animism in religion—as a "skilled observer," despite the fact that he never set foot on the subcontinent, reflects how specialized knowledge about humans, societies, and cultures was becoming. The disciplinary authority of Tylor the anthropologist—predicated upon a view of humanity divisible into a set of comparative cultural categories—meant that Tylor did not need to see India's tribal peoples in order to develop a cross-culturally applicable classification: his observations in Cuba and America offered enough data for his universalistic claims. Meanwhile, Tylor and other European scholars incorporated the information provided by the government, officials, and scholars in British India into their own work. Hence, the ocular authority that once sold the Daniells' paintings and legitimated Buchanan's results now gave way, at least in part, to disciplinary authority derived from formally structured communities of knowledge brokers operating within an increasingly globalized matrix of information.

While transportation advances indeed had shrunk the world, the scholar could not be everywhere. However, the development of mass publications, university departments, and learned societies fostered networks of knowledge that exchanged data presumably vouchsafed through their collection via the scientific method and made comparable through universally applicable categories such as "Animism" (or, for that matter, "religion.") And, so, Tylor—an absent anthropologist—served as a skilled observer who legitimated a census category for an official (who nursed his doubts) with actual experience among those to whom it is applied. Two decades later, the report for the Bihar and Orissa province went a step further by capitulating to anthropology—that "specialized branch

of science" with its "specially qualified experts"—the expertise necessary to draw conclusions beyond the census's limited ethnological claims.[2]

The census of India passed from being the preeminent source of knowledge about Indians to being a copartner for intensive, disciplinary investigation to offering data and tentative conclusions, with more scientific conclusions being left to specialized experts. The provincial report on the 1869 Oudh census included copies of accounts of Indian urban enumerations that had been published previously in *Asiatic Researches* and *The Journal of the Asiatic Society*, reflecting the initial coalescence of statistics as a state and publicly sponsored discipline. Meanwhile, other forms of knowledge developed in part in league with the census—gathering data while offering methods of analysis—until, later, each diverged from statistics as a mature discipline that ideally reinforced other disciplines' conclusions. In this way, historians drew upon the results of archaeological research, ethnographers considered the implications of geography, and linguists projected their conclusions on maps prepared by topographers. The practitioners of these various disciplines may not have understood the technicalities of one another's ways of knowing, but their results, available through variously available publications, could complement and support each other in part because of a common universal, positivist frame of reference. Most significantly in its impact on the lives of Indians, these disciplines confirmed the categories used by the census and other knowledge projects, the concrete lines that divided them, and the essential qualities that defined them. Scientism made all this possible by providing a common frame, an ideal of disciplinary interrelatedness, and a popularization of disciplinary authority.

The enormity of this globalizing matrix of disciplines and its universal focus on such themes as race and social stratification paradoxically makes the focus on one site—and one as small as a village—particularly advantageous. This allows for a manageable collection of representations by which to evaluate changes and continuities in recorded depictions of its residents, while evaluating the relative interests expressed in specific topics. In the case of Chainpur, authors certainly paid attention to caste from Buchanan's arrival to Ray's departure, while the language of race increasingly connected skin color with biological difference. However, the panoply of representations demonstrates the persistence of religion as the primary metacategory (often made manifest through metanarratives) of social differentialization. When religion was not mentioned explicitly in concert with *jati* or *baradari* it was understood: Brahmans were Hindus, Saiyids were Muslims. Although some castes included both Hindus and Muslims, they tended to wield so little social or ritual status that they were inconsequential to British political and economic concerns and gained little notice. While sex also served as an essential metacategory, it tended to feature less in discourse because Indian men were of most concern to Britons. This was first because it was men who performed most of the legal, military, political, and economic activities that most concerned Britons and, second, because purdah and other restrictions left most women inaccessible to British authors who, overwhelmingly, were men. Sex generally arose only as a concern in relation to

social issues involving the perceived oppression of women such as sati, female infanticide, girls' education, and the zenana, not in regard to the everyday operations of the government.

If the surest evidence of hegemony is the adoption of the paradigms and structures of the hegemon by those attempting to resist it, then the scientistic hegemony is secure in Chainpur, and India in general. People routinely reference "the cause of science," "scientific accuracy," "scientific precision," and "scientific objectivity" as though science is a monolithic, self-apparent enterprise defined by its perfection of knowledge and devoid of obfuscations or selfish motives. The scientism that Indians have adopted along with particular forms of cartography, demography, ethnography, ethnology, historiography, and religious studies evidences the pervasiveness and persuasiveness of British epistemic hegemony. The struggle of various Indian groups to be represented in the census, for example, demonstrates a shift from suspicion of this British project to co-option of it to further their interests. Post-independence India (and, to a lesser degree, Pakistan and Bangladesh) has maintained the scientific research arms of the government such as the Survey of India, the Geological Survey of India, and the Archaeological Survey of India. India continued centuries of ethnographic surveys in 1989 with a new survey.[3] This manifests both Indian agency and the establishment of bureaucratic institutions for the creation of knowledge based, not on lines of affinity as in the pre-British period, but on models of objectivity established (if not fully realized) in large part by Britons. The revolution of statistical knowledge that began to replace human intelligence after 1830 has found its ultimate victory.[4]

Meanwhile, the powers of scientistic representations only continue to grow, imbuing a larger public with the democratic authority of empirical observation. Exemplifying the increasing pervasiveness of scientism and growing persuasiveness of certain technologies of depiction, Google Earth provides the multiplying numbers of Internet surfers the ability to zoom in and out with a view of Chainpur that makes the multiple scaled maps in the atlas of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* look quaint. The marriage of astrophysics, geography, cartography, and photography convincingly offers users a deity's-eye view of the world that allows for the objective location and view of almost any village, town, or city on the planet. To wit, the user can gaze into courtyards formerly protected from the unwanted gaze by tall, windowless walls. As the Internet finds its inevitable way into Chainpur homes, residents will engage more easily with these new technologies of representation to know their own village.

Yet the apparent transparency of the truth offered by this most modern representation only hides all the better the subjectivity of its enframing and presentation—except in moments when the seams of construction show. At the time of this book's publication, the supposedly singular, deity-given vision of Chainpur provided by Google Earth*

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* 25° 02′ 01″ north latitude, 83° 30′ 24″ east longitude.

is bifurcated unexpectedly by a temporal rift. The village inadvertently is divided east-west into two photographic segments: clearly defined features to the north and haze obscured features to the south. In a previous iteration, the photographic discrepancy ran north-south, so Chainpur appeared to be enjoying its verdant growing season while its neighbors to the west were in the dusty dry depths of summer. Without such indicators, certain images might appear singularly true—offering a totalistic vision—which can easily lead us to lose sight of the comparative paradigms by which we inherently engage the world, even a picture. This becomes particularly significant in regard to those comparative modes, such as the statistical and evolutionary ones, that appear most congruent with scientistic ideals, and become most liable to hidden manipulations under the guise of scientific authority.

In 2005, the Centre for Policy Studies in Chennai revised and reissued a book entitled *Religious Demography of India*. The statistics tables, mathematical graphs, and demographic maps combine with the high-production-value volume to evince a scientistic sureness. As we have seen repeatedly in examples from British India, the categories adopted by the authors clearly evidence their intellectual assumptions and social expectations. As the title portends, the primary metacategory of differentialization is religion. Not only does the book rely upon religious identifications such as "Muslim" and "Christian," it recognizes them as part of "religions"—Islam and Christianity. Poignantly, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and tribals belong not to Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, et cetera, but to "Indian Religions" and, so, these individuals are collectively termed "Indian Religionists" (the upper-case "r" exerting a claim for the term as a proper noun, comparative to "Muslims" and "Christians"). In contradistinction to the "expansionist religions" of Islam and Christianity, Indian Religionists belong to "religions of native Indian origin."[†] These stem historically from an ancient, homogenous civilization rooted in *Sanatana dharma* in which "Indians, living in their splendid and rich isolation, were at peace with themselves, with nature, and the world; the *Sanatana dharma* enshrines, at its heart, a sense of deep respect for all aspects of creation." In contrast with this holistic calm, "Islamic" expeditions, forces, and rulers introduced heterogeneity to the subcontinent for the first time, followed by the impact of Christianity propounded by British occupation. These categories centrally serve the thrust of the volume, which is to provide statistical evidence that "only reconfirms the distinct possibility that Muslims and Christians together shall become the majority in the Indian region early in the second half of the twenty-first century." The authors' contention that "the whole of India" comprises "the Indian Union," Pakistan, and Bangladesh reflects yet another important categorical decision meant to promote a very particular political construction.[5]

[†] Apparently because the authors presume they have fully acculturated to India, Jews and Parsis fall under "Indian Religionists" despite the foreign origin of their religions. Joshi, Srinivas, and Bajaj 2005, 3.

The political interest engrained in the book becomes more apparent with a foreword written by L. K. Advani who was, at the time he penned it, India's deputy prime minister. Relying heavily on anti-Muslim sentiment, Advani had been a primary architect in the Bharatiya Janata Party's orchestration of middle-class, Hindu nationalist anxiety and anger during the 1980s. Conjoined efforts by the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh led concomitantly to the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and to the ascent of the BJP to national power in 1996. Hence, the book attempts to forge a united and threatened Hindu community by painting a dismal fate for them as Indian Religionists. It claims that through excessive fertility and unequal emigration rates, Muslims and Christians have forced demographic shifts in regions like Karnataka, Assam, and Bihar that compare with those in Kashmir Valley, which has been "cleansed of any meaningful Hindu presence." The authors warn that similar conditions in parts of Haryana, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Orissa threaten to reduce Hindus to a minority there as well. The statistics upon which the authors draw derive solely from more than a century's worth of Census of India data, aided by an altered policy (under the BJP government) that, for the first time since independence, collects data that correlates age, literacy, and work participation with religion. All of this, the book confidently reports, demonstrates that "religious heterogeneity of the Indian population, and its division into mainly the Hindus and Muslims, was a demographic reflection of relatively recent events in Indian history."[6] In other words, the census statistics validate an effort to read assertions of mutual exclusivity today onto a millennium of history in a manner echoing British assertions. Although many Britons recognized significant historical changes in South Asia, these tended not to be found in their encyclopedic, ethnographic, evolutionary, or statistical comparisons based upon assumptions of Hindu-Muslim mutual exclusion and antagonism.

If biology has shifted from the essentialism of Linnaeus's taxonomical system because evolutionary science has demonstrated how species do not remain stagnant and are historical, then it behooves the study of South Asian religions to do the same in regard to religious traditions. "Hindu" and "Muslim" are not essentially defined terms, but identities that demonstrate change, conflict, and collusion. These religious identities are the sole identities for relatively few, since most Indians associate with multiple communities (neighborhoods, villages, cities, school classes, age groups, economic classes, professions). Their social lives necessarily demand a complex, continual adjustment of identity as they interact with the diverse groups at home, at school, in the bazaar, in the street, at work, and at leisure. Linnaean taxonomy has reshaped how Europeans—and much of the rest of the world—know living beings. However, unlike tigers, platypuses, and crabs, humans do not abide by a single, species-defined identity imposed by outsiders, since they busily craft a web of social interactions and identifiers, for themselves and for others. And so it is left to Chainpur residents to determine what will be their relationship with the category *religion*. Will they accept it as a universal that their progenitors always already held in the same way many accept their Indian nationalism?[7] Or will they

recognize how many of their contemporary lives fail to fit into the category's Christo-scientific limits?

In the 1540s, the *munsif* (subordinate judge) of Chainpur's *pargana* who dwelt in Chainpur proper built a water tank, while another man established an endowment to maintain it. The fact that Yusuf and Hemardrasen—the two respective patrons—have names perhaps identifiable as Muslim and Hindu seems to complement the fact that the inscription from which we learn all of this information has Persian and Sanskrit parallel texts (one starting with the bismillah and the other with a salutation to the god Ganesha). Visitors who manage to view the inscription in the Indian Museum in Kolkata, where it now resides, might feel caught between two interpretations. It is tempting to read the tank either (a) as an example of Hindu-Muslim *bhai-bhai* (fraternity) in which two members of different religious communities cooperated for the public good or (b) as an expression of the inherently bifurcated quality of sixteenth-century Chainpur in which both Muslims/Persian-readers and Hindus/Sanskrit-readers require separate but equal inscription space.[8] Hopefully, my own inscribing has helped prompt us toward less easily settled answers by questioning and challenging the categorical presumption of monolithic, conflated religious/political/linguistic identities. We cannot know what prompted Yusuf and Hemardrasen's cooperation in this period when Chainpur's other Suri-era buildings were constructed. What we do know is that at least two contemporaries participated in a cooperative venture for a constructive purpose that involved complex linguistic, religious, and even calendrical expressions. Also, we recognize that the comparative methods we choose and the categorical reflexes that we discipline in ourselves determine what interpretations appear possible. While exclusivist categorical imperatives promoted by some of Yusuf and Hemardrasen's contemporaries evidently did not thwart this pluralist enterprise, the question remains how much latitude for understanding we allow ourselves today when the imperatives to concrete, singular classifications are so particularly prevalent in our scientific age.

*Appendix A*

# INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN FRANCIS BUCHANAN FOR THE SURVEY OF BENGAL AND BIHAR BY THE SUPREME GOVERNMENT ON SEPTEMBER 11, 1807

"Your inquiries are to extend throughout the whole of the territories subject to the immediate authority of the Presidency of Fort William.

"The Governor General in Council is of opinion that these inquiries should commence in the district of Rungpur, and that from thence you should proceed to the westward through each district on the north side of the Ganges, until you reach the western boundary of the Honourable Company's provinces. You will then proceed towards the south and east, until you have examined all the districts on the south side of the great river, and afterwards proceed to Dacca, and the other districts towards the eastern frontier.

"It is also desirable, that you should extend your inquiries to the adjacent countries, and to those petty states with which the British Government has no regular intercourse. In performing this duty, however, you are prohibited from quitting the Company's territories, and are directed to confine your inquiries to consulting such of the natives of those countries as you may meet with, or natives of the British territories who have visited the countries in question.

"Your inquiries should be particularly directed to the following subjects, which you are to examine with as much accuracy as local circumstances will admit.

"I. A *Topographical* account of each district, including the extent, soil, plains, mountains, rivers, harbours, towns and subdivisions; together with an account of the air and weather, and whatever you may discover worthy of remark concerning the *history and antiquities* of the country.

"II. *The Condition of the Inhabitants;* their number, the state of their food, clothing, and habitations; the peculiar diseases to which they are liable; together with the means that have been taken or may be proposed to remove them; the education of youth; and the provision or resources for the indigent.

"III. *Religion;* the number, progress, and most remarkable customs of each different sect or tribe of which the population consists; together with the emoluments and power which their priests and chiefs enjoy; and what circumstances exist or may probably arise that might attach them to Government, or render them disaffected.

"IV. *The Natural Productions of the Country,* animal, vegetable, and mineral; especially such as are made of in diet, in medicine, in commerce, or in arts and manufacturers. The following works deserve your particular attention:

"1st. The *fisheries*, their extent, the manner in which they are conducted, and the obstacles that appear to exist against their improvement and extension.

"2nd. The *forests*, or which you will endeavor to ascertain the extent and situation, with respect to water conveyance. You will investigate the kinds of trees which they contain, together with their comparative value, and you will point out such means, as occur to you, for increasing the number of more valuable kinds, or for introducing new ones that may be still more useful.

"3rd. The *mines* and *quarries* are objects of particular concern. You will investigate their produce, the manner of working them, and the state of the people employed.

"V. *Agriculture,* under which head your inquiries are to be directed to the following points:

"1st. The different kinds of *vegetables* cultivated, whether for food, forage, medicine, or intoxication, or as raw materials for the arts: the modes of cultivation adopted for each kind; the seasons when they are sown and reaped; the value of the produce of a given extent of land cultivated with each kind; the profit arising to the cultivator from each, and the manner in which each is prepared and fitted for market. Should it appear that any new object of cultivation could be introduced with advantage, you will suggest the means by which its introduction may be encouraged.

"2nd. The *implements of husbandry* employed, with the defects and advantages of each, and suggestions for the introduction of new ones, that may be more effectual.

"3rd. The manure employed for the soil, especially the means used for irrigation.

"4th. The means used for excluding floods and inundations, with such remarks as may occur to you on the defects in their management, and the remedies that might be employed.

"5th. The different breeds of the *cattle, poultry, and other domestic animals* reared by the natives. The manner in which they are bred and kept; the profits derived from rearing and maintaining them; the kinds used in labour; whether the produce of the country be sufficient, without importation, to answer the demand, or to enable the farmer to export; and whether any kids not now reared might be advantageously introduced.

"6th. *Fences,* the various kinds that are used, or that might be introduced, with observations concerning the utility of this part of agriculture in the present state of the country.

"7th. The state of *farms;* their usual size, the stock required, with the manner in which it is procured; the expense of management; the rent, whether paid in specie or in kind; the wages and condition of farming servants and labourers employed in husbandry; tenures by which farms are held, with their comparative advantages, and the means which, in your opinion, may be employed to extend and improve the cultivation of the country.

"8th. The *state of the landed property,* and of the *tenures* by which it is held, in so far as these seem to affect agriculture.

"VI. The progress made by the natives in the *fine arts,* in the *common arts,* and the state of the *manufacturers;* you will describe their architecture, sculptures, and paintings, and inquire into the different processes and machinery used by their workers, and procure an account of the various kinds and amount of goods manufactured in each district. It should also be an object of your attention to ascertain the ability of the country to produce the raw materials used in them; and what proportion, if any, is necessary to be imported from other countries, and under what advantages or disadvantages such importation now is, or might be made; you will also ascertain how the necessary capital is procured, the situation of the artists and manufacturers, the mode of providing their goods, the usual rates of affluence with respect to the cultivators of the land, their domestic usages, the nature of their sales, and the regulations respecting their markets. Should it appear to you that any new art or manufacture might be introduced with advantage into any district, you are to point out in what manner you think it may be accomplished.

"VII. *Commerce;* the quantity of goods exported and imported in each district; the manner of conducting sales, especially at fairs and markets; the regulation of money, weights, and measures; the nature of the conveyance of goods by land and water, and the means by which this may be facilitated, especially by making or repairing roads.

"In addition to the foregoing objects of inquiry, you will take every opportunity of forwarding to the Company's Botanical Garden at this presidency, whatever useful or rare and curious plants and seeds you may be enabled to acquire in the progress of your researches, with such observations as may be necessary for their culture."[1]

*Appendix B*

# CATEGORIES USED ON CENSUS ENUMERATORS' SCHEDULES[1]

| 1872 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Marital status | Marital status | Marital status | Marital status |
| Sex | Sex | Sex | Sex | Sex |
| Age | Age | Age | Age | Age |
| Religion or caste | Religion | Religion | Religion | Religion |
| | | Sect of religion | | |
| Race and tribe | Caste or sect | Caste or tribe | Caste, tribe, or race | Caste, tribe, or race |
| | | Caste subdivision | | |
| | Mother tongue | Mother tongue | Language | Usual language |
| | Birthplace | Birthplace | Birthplace | Birthplace |
| Occupation | Occupation | Occupation | Occupation | Occupation |
| | Education | Literacy | Literacy | Literacy |
| | Infirmities | Infirmities | Infirmities | Infirmities |
| | | Language of literacy | English | English |

| 1921 | 1931 | 1941 | 1961 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marital status | Marital status | Marital status | Marital status |
| Sex | Sex | Sex | Sex |
| Age | Age | Age | Age |
| Religion | Religion | Religion | Religion |
| Caste, tribe, or race | Caste, tribe, or race (with sub-caste) | Race, tribe, or caste | S.C./S.T. |
| Usual language | Mother tongue | Mother tongue | Mother tongue |
| Birthplace | Birthplace | Birthplace | Birthplace |
| Occupation | Occupation | Occupation | Occupation |
| Literacy | Literacy | Literacy | Literacy |
| Infirmities | Infirmities | | |
| English | English | English | |
| | | Number of children | |
| | Other languages | Other languages | Bilingualism |
| | Hindi or Urdu literacy | Script used | |
| | | | Nationality |

*Appendix C*

## GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTION OF A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF INDIA

Of 162 copies to be distributed (including thirty to the India Office)

| | |
|---|---|
| Royal Asiatic Society | Royal Society (London, Edinburgh, Dublin) |
| Royal Geographical Society | Royal Statistical Society |
| Anthropological Institute, London | Zoological Society |
| The University of London | The University of Oxford |
| The University of Cambridge | The University of Edinburgh |
| The University of Dublin | British Association |
| R. Colonial Institute, Royal Institution | R. United Services Institution |
| Victoria Institute | Indian Institute, Oxford |
| Museum, Oxford | Board of Indian Civil Service Studies |
| Royal Society of New South Wales | Royal Society of Victoria |
| Royal Society of New Zealand | Asiatic Society of Ceylon |
| Asiatic Society of Shanghai | Asiatic Society of Singapore |
| Grey Library, Cape Town | University, Toronto |
| Asiatic Society of Tokio, Japan [sic] | American Oriental Society |
| Folk Lore Society, London | Anthropological Society, Berlin |
| Smithsonian Institution | American Philosophical Society |

| | |
|---|---|
| American Ethnological Society | Royal Society, Batavia |
| Archæological Society, Samarang | Academie der Wetenschappen, Amsterdam |
| Asiatic Society of The Hague | Ethnological Museum, Leiden |
| Academie Royale des Sciences, Bruxelles | Ethnological Society, Helsingfors |
| Archæological Institute, St. Petersburgh | Geographical Society, St. Petersburgh Imperial |
| Academy, St. Petersburgh | University Library, Copenhagen |
| University Library, Upsala | University Library, Christiania |
| Musée Guimet | Société Asiatique |
| L'Institut Français | Société de Geographie |
| L'Université | La Società Orientale, Florence |
| Accademia dei Lincei, Rome [sic] | Imperial Academy, Vienna |
| Imperial Academy, Buda-Pest | Imperial Geographical Society, Vienna Oriental |
| Institute, Vienna | Germal Oriental Society, Halle |
| Petermann's Mittheilungen, Gotha | Geographical Society, Berlin |
| Royal Academy, Berlin | Ethnological Museum, Berlin |
| Royal Library, Berlin; | Royal Academy, Munich |
| Royal Academy, Göttingen. | |

Also, copies to 64 individuals including,

| | |
|---|---|
| E. B. Tylor, Oxford | M. Barth, Paris |
| M. Emile Senart, Paris | J. G. Frazer, Cambridge |
| A. Land, London | Francis Galton, London |
| Dr. J. G. Garson, New Scotland Yard | William Turner, Edinburgh |
| John Evans, Anthropological Institute | W. I. Merriam, Director of Census, N.Y. |
| Denzil Ibbetson | W. Crooke |
| Charles Elliott | Julins [*sic*] Jolly, Würzburg, Bavaria |
| A. A. Macdonell, Oxford.[1] | |

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1. Weber 1992 (1958), 344.
2. Van der Veer 2001, 8.
3. See Gottschalk 2000 and 2005.
4. Buchanan 1926, 128.
5. Gordon M. Ray, private journal (1940)—MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for March 19, 1940. OIOC.
6. The variety in representational methods has not diminished: post-independence foreign visitors have produced essays, books, and a website based on their research in Chainpur.
7. Bayly 1996, 8.
8. Yeatts 1943, 98; Census of India website. http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/old_report/Census_1941_tebles.html. Accessed June 12, 2012.
9. See Mines and Yazgi, 2010.
10. Ludden 1993, 263, 266.
11. Ludden 1993, 259–260.

## CHAPTER 1

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Proceedings of the National Institute of Science of India* 27. 1960. 564. As quoted in Sorell 1991, 2.
2. Moore 1986, 322.
3. Westfall 1986, 219–230.
4. Moore 1986, 328–329.
5. Bootie Cosgrove-Mather, "Poll: Creationism Trumps Evolution." *CBS News* website. http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/11/22/opinion/polls/main657083.shtml. Accessed June 12, 2012.

6. Larson 1997, 21.

7. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "religion"; online edition. Accessed June 12, 2012.

8. Smith 1998, 281.

9. *American Academy of Religion* website, http://www.aarweb.org. Accessed June 12, 2012.

10. Smith 1991 (1962), 144.

11. Smith 1998, 281.

12. *American Academy of Religion* website, http://www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Mission_Statement/default.asp. Accessed June 12, 2012.

13. Boyarin 2004, 204–206. Also, Balagangadhara 2005 (1994), 53.

14. Smith 1998, 270.

15. Shakespeare 1975, 1015. Act I, scene II, lines 91–92. Perhaps a survival of this use of *religion* is in the phrase "losing my religion." In the American South, this suggests being at one's wit's end or the end of one's tether—a situation when one might expect to lose one's conviction.

16. Smith 1998, 271, 275.

17. Masuzawa 2005, 61.

18. Van der Veer, 138.

19. Asad 1993, 39.

20. Weber 1946, 142–143.

21. Asad 1993, 46.

22. Jakobson and Pellegrini 2008, 3.

23. Asad 1993, 48–49.

24. King 1999, 27.

25. Smith 1991 (1962), 38–39.

26. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "heathen," "heathenism," "Mahometanism," "Confucianism"; online edition. Accessed August 9, 2008.

27. Oddie 2006, 71.

28. Smith 1991 (1962), 53.

29. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "polytheism," " monotheism," "pantheism," "totemism," "fetishism," "henotheism," "animism"; online edition. Accessed August 9, 2008.

30. Masuzawa 2005, 67–68.

31. Baker 1997, 146.

32. Baker 1997, 144–148.

33. Schipper 1988, 12–13. As quoted in translation in Balagangadhara 2005 (1994), 17.

34. Baker 1997, 148–154.

35. Baker 1997, 166.

36. Boyarin 2004, 202.

37. King 1999, 36.

38. Boyarin 2004, 224.

39. Collins 2000, 39. Cited in Boyarin 2004, 8.

40. Killingley 1993. 60. Cited in Pennington 2005, 201.

41. Butler 1997, 2.

42. Smith 1998, 269.

43. King 1999, 46.

44. Toumey 1994, 20.

45. Hayek 1952, 13.

46. Hayek 1952, 15.

47. Dupre 1994, 374–381.

48. Foucault 1971 (1969), 179.

49. Cunningham and Williams 1993, 421–424.

50. Bowler and Morus 2005, 333.

51. Drayton 2001 (1998), 234.

52. Stafford 1999, 295–296.

53. Cunningham and Williams 1993, 425.

54. Olson 2008, 178–179.

55. Drayton 2001 (1998), 234.

56. Drayton 2001 (1998), 237.

57. Hunter 1908, 193.

58. Drayton 2001 (1998), 244.

59. Harley 2001, 114.

60. Stafford 1999, 294.

61. Hodgson 1974, 238.

62. Prakash 1999, 50–51.

63. Syed Ahmed Khan to Mawlawi Tasadduq as quoted in Hay 1988, 188–189.

64. Cunningham and Williams 1993, 424.

65. Rouse 1987, 188.

66. British Science Association website, http://www.britishscienceassociation.org/web/AboutUs/OurHistory/index.htm. Accessed June 12, 2012. The website notes that the organization renamed itself the British Science Association in 2009.

67. Sorell 1991, 5.

68. MacLeod 1982, 4.

69. Sorell 1991, 6.

70. Cunningham and Williams 1993, 411–412.

71. Kuhn 1970 (1962), 25–28, 38, 136–140.

72. Foucault 1994 (1966), 125.

73. As a native of an emotion-purged and ultra-rationalist planet, what other position would *Star Trek*'s Mr. Spock have served than chief science officer?

74. Sharma 1979, 71.

75. MacLeod 1982, 4.

76. Toumey 1994, 27.

77. King, 1999, 46.

78. Cunningham and Williams 1993, 427.

79. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Proceedings of the National Institute of Science of India* 27. 1960. 564. As quoted in Sorell 1991, 2.

80. Nandy 1980, 17–91.

81. Prakash 1999, 100–105.

82. Drayton 2001 (1998), 233–234, 238, 242.

83. *Census of India, 1891*, 1892–1893, 391–392. As cited in Pinch 2003, 160.

84. Stafford 1999, 295.

85. Arnold 2006, 161.

86. Drayton 2001 (1998), 241, 251.

87. Arnold 2006, 151, 158, 182–183.
88. Rouse 1996, 132.
89. Weber, 1946, 134–135.
90. Grant 1986, 50–51.
91. Easton 1991, 10–11.
92. Haraway 1997, 24, 31.
93. Bourdieu 2004 (2001), 47–48.
94. Bayly 2004, 313, 321.
95. Bowler and Morus 2005, 319–320, 327, 333–334.
96. For a poignant example, see the variable fortunes of the first person to create a geological map of Britain. Winchester 2002.
97. Foucault 1971 (1969), 222.
98. Bourdieu 2004 (2001), 50, 52.
99. Haraway 1997, 25–26, 32.
100. Bourdieu 2004 (2001), 65.
101. Headrick 2000, 10, 18–19.
102. Kuhn 1970 (1962), 136–138.
103. Bourdieu 2004 (2001), 69.
104. Kent 1981, 25–30.
105. Bayly 2004, 315.
106. Not all agreed with the proposition that a universal rationality existed: Romanticism suggested that human nature varied according to diverse mixtures of the rational and irrational that varied by nation and period. See Inden 1990, 93.
107. King 1999, 44.
108. Bayly 2004, 315.
109. Easton 1991, 11.
110. Foucault 1994 (1966), 140, 144.
111. This attention to visible qualities and structural elements of natural objects intersected with the increasing mathematicalization of European science and so led to an emphasis on measurement. In time, empiricism and measurement would begin to affect the classification of the human world as well. See Foucault 1994 (1966), 134–137.
112. Müller 1885, 16.
113. Müller 1964 (1878), 79.
114. Müller 1892, 76, 79.
115. Müller 1964 (1878), 128.
116. Sharpe 1986 (1975), 35. See also Strenski 2006, 85.
117. Said 1978, 67.
118. Bourdieu 2004 (2001), 70.

## CHAPTER 2

1. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “geology”; online edition. Accessed July 1, 2006.
2. Edney 1997, 17–18, 51.
3. Haraway 1997, 137.
4. As quoted in Harley 2001, 154.

5. Howes 2003, 184.

6. Edney 1997, 42.

7. Harley 2001, 59.

8. Mandair 2009, 78–79.

9. Letter from President and Council to Court of Directors, London. Fort Williams, November 26, 1764. In Srinivasachari 1964, 275.

10. Letter from President and Council, Fort William, to Court of Directors, London. March 30, 1767. In Singh 1949, 307.

11. Letter from President and Council to Court of Directors. Fort Williams, December 19, 1776. In Patwardhan 1971, 472.

12. *Guide* 1980, 185–186.

13. *Catalogue* 1878, 162–163.

14. Hirst 1917, 2.

15. This map fails to include a key for its symbols. However, in Rennell's *Atlas* the symbol used to depict Chainpur indicated "Large Bazars & Cutcherries." The latter term refers to administrative offices. Rennell 1780, Map 3.

16. See Du Glos, Richard, and Russel, 1767–1771.

17. Shahabad Collector's volume no. 3, 1773–1776. BSA.

18. For deliberations on indigenous understandings and representations of territory, with special reference to South India, see Howes 2003, 184–191.

19. Rennell 1792, ii–iii.

20. The sixteenth century Mughal text *Ain-i Akbari* lists "Chakund" and "Jaund" as alternate names of a *mahal* in *sarkar* Rohtas. Scholars have debated which modern place can be identified with this name that has also been rendered as "Chaund" in Suri and Mughal sources due to idiosyncrasies in the Persian script. Brahmadeva Prasad Ambashthya devotes a page-long footnote to this issue in his translation of the *Tarikh-i-Ser Sahi* in which Jaund appears as the name of a *pargana*. Although he identifies the current village of Chand (or Chaund as he writes it) with Allami's "Chakund/Jaund," it is almost certainly Chainpur instead. Compared to the multiple Suri-era structures surrounding Chainpur, only the remnants of a fort can be found today in Chand. Moreover, four generations of Mughals later, during Aurangzeb's rule, Chainpur replaced Chand as the name of one of the Mughal *pargana*s in Bihar—probably a holdover of the Suri *mahal*—a designation the British continued to use. Irfan Habib also equates Chand with Chainpur (1986 [1982], 39).

21. Ahmad 1973, 137–138.

22. Allami 2001 (1891), 2:168.

23. Bayly 1996, 22.

24. Bayly 1996, 10–20.

25. Robb 1997, 247.

26. Schwartzberg 1992a, 507.

27. Habib 1980, 95.

28. *Guide* 1992, 150.

29. Rennell 1792, vi.

30. Edney 1997, 84.

31. Turnbull 1989, 25. O'Connor and Clark 2007, 16.

32. Rennell 1776.

33. Hirst 1917, 3.

34. Gole 1989, 14.

35. Ryan 1996, 4.

36. Edney 1997, 115.

37. Schwartzberg 1992b, 392.

38. *Transport for London*, London Underground website. http://www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/projectsandschemes/2443.aspx. Accessed June 12, 2012.

39. Raj 2006, 63.

40. Harley 1987, 12.

41. Robinson 1982, 31–32.

42. Gole 1989, 14.

43. Schwartzberg 1992a, 507. Gole 1989, 14.

44. Turnbull 1989, 25.

45. Rennell 1778, iv.

46. Bayly 1996, 17, 20–21, 54–55.

47. Buchanan 1986a (1934), 439–440.

48. De Certeau 1988, 36, 92.

49. Letter from D. Burges, Collector of Shahabad, to A. Seton, Board of Revenue. Zillah Shahabad Collectorship, March 13, 1813. BSA.

50. Letter from C. W. Smith, Judge, Zillah Shahabad, to H. Douglas, Senior Judge and other judges of the Court of Appeal, Patna. Zillah Shahabad, February 22, 1828. F/4/1353/53663. OIOC.

51. Ryan 1996, 5-8.

52. Twining 1893, 503–504.

53. Letter from Superintendent of Legal Affairs to R. M. Filghmeen, Acting Secretary to the Commissioner's [*sic*] in Behar & Benares. July 19, 1817. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1816. Number 73. BSA.

54. Letter from A. Tufton, Collector of Shahabad, to Wiliam Cowper, Board of Revenue. Shahabad, June 17, 1797. Shahabad Collector's Volume No. 26. Letters Sent: Commencing from 12th March 1797 ending 10th August 1797. BSA.

55. Letter from W. Young, Collector of Sarun, to W. Ewer, Commissioner of Revenue, Sarun Division. Collector's Office, Sarun, May 5, 1833. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1833. Volume 97. BSA.

56. Hubback 1918, 45, 157.

57. Letter from J. W. Laing, Shahabad Collector to R. Chamberlain, Secretary to the Commissioner in Behar and Benares. Collector's Office, July 31, 1817. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1817. Number 23. BSA.

58. Buchanan 1986a (1934), 373–374.

59. Hunter 1894, 220.

60. Banurji 1877, 28.

61. Hunter 1894, 220.

62. Buchanan 1926, 128.

63. Markham 1874, 15.

64. Gupta 1981, 80.

65. Singh 1949, 85.

66. Edney 1997, 202.

67. Markham 1874, 402.

68. Edney 1997, 15.

69. Rennell 1792, iv–v.

70. Rennell, 1782, xii. As quoted in Edney 1997, 13.

71. Rennell, 1792, xxi–xii.

72. Rennell, 1792, xl.

73. Gupta 1981, 67.

74. Letter from the Court of Directors, Public Department to the Governor General and Council, Fort William, Bengal. March 27, 1787. In Singh 1972, 705–706.

75. Hirst 1914, 11.

76. Hand 1894, 27, 32, 44–45, 47.

77. Letter from M. Lushington, Superintendent of Survey in Behar and Shahabad, to Commissioner of Revenue, Patna Division. No. 19, May 9, 1844, Office of the Superintendent of Survey in Behar and Shahabad. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1844. Volume 157. BSA.

78. Edney 1997, 322.

79. Harley 2001, 62.

80. "A Plan of a Mathematical and Geographical Survey extending across the Peninsula of India proposed to be carried into execution by Bde. Major Lambton," dated Fort St George, February 10, 1800. Home Department, Public No. 10. March 14, 1800. P.P. 926–39 O.C. March 14. No. 10. NAI.

81. Hubback 1918, 27.

82. Both types of surveys used a chain to measure distance. However, while the *thakbast* relied on a compass to measure horizontal angles, the professional survey employed a theodolite—a telescope that rotates in any direction—to measure both horizontal and vertical angles.

83. Hubback 1918, 27.

84. *Hindoo Patriot*, November 16, 1891. As quoted in *Protest* 1892, 31.

85. Markham 2004 (1878), 183.

86. Katten 2005, 49.

87. Schwartzberg 1992b, 444.

88. Frank Perlin as described in Schwartzberg 1992b, 444.

89. Hirst 1912, 3.

90. Hirst 1912, 28.

91. Harley 2001, 157–159.

92. Harkara map, 1788. WD2673. OIOC. My appreciation to Jennifer Howe of the OIOC for bringing this map to my attention.

93. Buchanan 1926, 127.

94. Hirst 1912, Appendix J.

95. Harley 2001, 69–70.

96. Hirst 1912, Appendix E, Table B.

97. "Extract from a Despatch from the Honorable the Court of Directors No. 12 dated the 20th April 1854," found in Letter from the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces, to the Commissioner of Revenue for the Division of [blank]. No. 8, Fort William, June 1, 1855. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1855. Volume 238. BSA.

98. Letter from N. Maxwell, Revenue Surveyor, to E. C. Ravenshaw, Commissioner for the Division of Patna. No. 5, 12 October 1841, Dinapoor. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1846. No. 279. BSA.

99. Travers 1849.

100. Letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Officiating Secretary to the Board of Revenue. No. 191, Fort William, 10 November 1856. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1855. Volume 238. BSA.

101. Stephen, 1851.

102. Heber 1873, 161–162, 169.

103. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1860. No volume number. BSA; Report "Vernacular Education N.W. Princes" from F. J. Mowah, Secretary Council of Education to W. Muir, Secretary to the Government of the N.W. Provinces. Calcutta, June 4, 1853. Included in Letter from G. Plowden, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India to C. Beadon, Secretary to the Government of Bengal. No. 749, November 4, 1853. NAI.

104. *Report* 1872, 226.

105. Kipling 1989 (1901), 166.

106. *Report* 1913, 265.

107. Hubback 1918, 128.

108. *JASB*. Vol. 10, pt. 2, no. 116 (July–December 1841), i–ii.

109. Tassin 1841.

110. Blumhardt 1889, columns 86, 145.

111. Blumhardt 1889, columns 325–326.

112. Harley 2001, 113, 123.

113. McLuhan 1997 (1964), 170–175.

114. *Imperial Gazetteer of India* 1909:1, vi–vii.

115. Edney 1997, 199.

116. *Guide* 1992, 146.

117. Edney 1997, 47.

118. Harley and Woodward 1992, 511.

119. Howes 2003, 184.

120. Rennell, 1785, opposite 74.

121. Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Home Department (Public). Simla, May 23, 1901. No. 3219/3232. Home Department. Public Nos. 122–133 (Part A). November 1901. NAI. 10.

122. The 1931 edition revised the original 1909 *Gazetteer* atlas, with minor changes.

123. Prakash 1999, 83, 118–120.

124. *Imperial Gazetteer Atlas* 1931, v.

125. Harley 2001, 63.

126. Harley 2001, 111.

127. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "cartography"; online edition. Accessed May 9, 2009.

128. Edney 1997, 28, 35–36, 237.

## FIRST THEORETICAL INTERLUDE

1. Wilson 1837, 44.

2. Smith 1982, 35.

3. Mukherjee 1993, 1.

4. Rosch 1977. As quoted in Ellen 2006, 13.

5. Geertz 2000 (1977), 91–93.

6. D'Ancona 2003; da Ponte 1990; Masuzawa 2005, 58–60.

7. Polo 1854, 167–168.

8. Lecointre and Le Guyader 2006, 17.

9. Masuzawa 2005, 61.

10. Lecointre and Le Guyader 2006, 17.

11. Alighieri 1918, 317. As cited in Reeves 2000, 96.

12. *Society of Archbishop Justus* webpage, http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1549/Readings_HolyWeek_1549.htm#Good%20Friday. Accessed June 12, 2012.

13. Philips 1719. As quoted in Oddie 2006, 14.

CHAPTER 3

1. Smith 1982, 23.

2. Rubiés 2000, 35, 44, 66, 83.

3. Chattopadhyaya 1998, 89.

4. Kalhana 1990 (1935), 28.

5. Kalhana 1990 (1935), 109.

6. Monier-Williams 1990 (1899,), s.v. "mleccha."

7. Dutt 1993 (1898), 17.

8. Thapar 2004, 440.

9. Talbot 1995.

10. Thapar 2004, 159–160.

11. Schimmel 1980, 4–5.

12. Richard Eaton, personal conversation. June 3, 2009.

13. Schimmel 2005, 112.

14. Waardenburg 1999, 70.

15. Embree 1988, 414–415.

16. Schimmel 1980, 9.

17. See Eaton 2000.

18. Schimmel 1980, 85.

19. Eaton 2000, 262–263.

20. Schimmel 2005, 115.

21. Gottschalk 2000, 20–22,135–136.

22. Kabir 2002, 69–70.

23. Lorenzen 2006, 2–3, 24–33, 36.

24. For instance, see *Church Missionary Record* 1833, 34–36; Williams 1828, 180–184; *Missionary Herald* 1829, 96–98; *Missionary Chronicle* 1838, 230–231; *Magazin* 1821, 35–37, 73–105.

25. Hobbes 1852, no page number.

26. *Missionary Herald* 1829, 96.

27. Oddie 2006, 54–55.

28. Masuzawa 2005, 56.

29. Oddie 2006, 22–23, 211.

30. Smith 1856, 10.

31. Monier-Williams 1885, 184–185. See Oddie 2006, 247–248 for an important change in Monier-Williams's views.

32. Hunter 1908, 222.

33. Grierson 1906, 157.

34. Fitch 1811, 407–409.

35. Heber 1873, 1:149.

36. Royle 1997, 291.

37. Cooper and Atterbury 2001, 125–126.

38. Royle 1997, 300.

39. Royle 1997, 306, 316.

40. Cooper and Atterbury 2001, 126.

41. Asad 1993. 45–46.

42. Van der Veer 2001, 31–33.

43. *Church Missionary Society Archive*, 2003. 7–10.

44. Long 1848, Tomory and Macdonald 1910, *List* 1926. Mention of two Indian Christian missionaries in Chainpur (Modak 1900, 219) apparently confuses the village of this name in Shahabad district with one in southern Bihar.

45. Barclay and Copplestone 1949, 1131; Harrington and Foley 1931, 27.

46. Long [1846], 105–106.

47. Oddie 2006, 25.

48. Conway 1906, 7.

49. Oddie 2006, 19, 301–303.

50. Long [1846], 106, 197–198.

51. Leupolt 1884, 300; January 18, 1843 letter from Rev. W. Bowley to Captain Peevor responding to latter's letter of September 30. 592. *Section VI: Missions to India. Part I: India General and North India Mission, C I 1 M 8 Mission Book*. microfilm. Reel 21. CMSA.

52. Weitbrecht 1858, 311.

53. William Bowley. *Journals and Journal Extracts*. C I 1/O 53/1–128. Church Missionary Society, Birmingham. CI1/053/118. CMSA.

54. Heber 1829, 2:341. Also, *Church Missionary Society Archive*. Section VI: Missions to India. Parts 1–2. Marlborough: Adam Matthew Publications, 2003. 9. CMSA.

55. William Bowley. *Journals and Journal Extracts*. C I 1/O 53/1–128. Church Missionary Society, Birmingham. CI1/053/113. CMSA.

56. Letter from Rev. W. Bowley to Captain Peevor, January 18, 1843. *Section VI: Missions to India. Part I: India General and North India Mission, C I 1 M 8 Mission Book*. microfilm. Reel 21. CMSA.

57. *Missionary Register* 1828, 152–153.

58. Fitch 1811, 412, 414.

59. William Bowley. *Journals and Journal Extracts*. C I 1/O 53/1–128. Church Missionary Society, Birmingham. CI1/053/122. CMSA.

60. Fitch 1811, 411.

61. Weitbrecht 1858, 314.

62. William Bowley. *Journals and Journal Extracts*. C I 1/O 53/1–128. Church Missionary Society, Birmingham. CI1/053/113; *Section VI: Missions to India. Part I: India General and North India Mission, C I 1 M 8 Mission Book*. Microfilm. Reel 21. CMSA.

63. Heber 1829, 341.

64. *Missionary Register* 1828, 97.

65. Van der Veer 2001, 43.

66. Leupolt 1846, x.

67. Leupolt 1846, i. G. A. Nicholls already introduced this etymology in his 1838 *Grammar of Geography adapted to the Education of Indian Youth.* See Bayly 1996, 310. Also in Hamilton's *Gazetteer*; see Bayly 1996, 311.

68. Leupolt 1846, 8–9.

69. Leupolt 1884, 43.

70. Leupolt 1884, 1.

71. Leupolt 1884, 46.

72. Leupolt 1846, 19.

73. Leupolt 1884, 379–383.

74. Leupolt 1884, 265.

75. Leupolt 1884, 265.

76. Leupolt 1884, 118.

77. Porter 1996, 211.

78. Leupolt 1884, 21–30.

79. Leupolt 1884, 35.

80. Hobbes 1893, 539.

81. Hobbes 1893, 550.

82. Hobbes 1893, xii.

83. Cooper and Atterbury 2001, 225.

84. Hobbes 1893, 70.

85. Hobbes 1893, 157.

86. Leupolt 1884, 36, 280, 535.

87. Hobbes 1893, 76.

88. Masuzawa 2005, 57.

89. Sunderland 1893, 11.

90. Hobbes 1893, 220.

91. Harrington and Foley 1931, 5.

92. Leupolt 1884, 112.

93. Leupolt 1884, 35.

94. Heber 1829, 42.

95. Heber 1873, 63.

96. Heber 1873, 189.

97. Heber 1873, 170.

98. Heber 1873, 111.

99. Heber 1873, 173.

100. Heber 1873, 176–177.

101. Heber 1873, 272.

102. The hymn's name is "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." Julian 1892, 399.

103. Heber 1873, 242.

104. Heber 1873, 163.

105. Heber 1873, 165.

106. Heber 1873, 111. 165, 171, 176, 232.

107. Leupolt 1847, 37–38.

108. Oddie 2006, 41, 295.
109. Leonowens 1884, 224.
110. Oddie 2006, 307–309.
111. Peebles 1875, 67–68.
112. Peebles 1875, 161, 237, 246–247, 404.
113. Peebles 1875, 239.
114. Peebles 1875, 239, 256.
115. Peebles 1875, 356–357.
116. Fitch 1811, 409.
117. Fitch 1811, 410–411.

## SECOND THEORETICAL INTERLUDE

1. Smith 1982, 23.
2. Dyson 2002 (1978), 37.
3. Smith 1982, 23.
4. Smith 1982, 23.
5. Smith 1982, 24–25.
6. Smith 1982, 21–25.
7. Mathew 2005, 457.

## CHAPTER 4

1. Arnold 2006, 26–27.
2. Dyson 2002 (1978), 37.
3. Arnold 2006, 15.
4. Arnold 2006, 21–23, 118.
5. Dalrymple 2004, 48–49.
6. Dalrymple 2002, 15, 17, 19–20.
7. Arnold 2006, 180.
8. Arnold 2006, 68.
9. Buchanan 1986b (1934), 167–168.
10. Archer 1980, 41, 46, 47.
11. Losty 2005.
12. Archer 1980, 9, 11–12.
13. Thomas 2004, 27.
14. Archer 1980, 9, 37.
15. Eaton 2004, 39–41.
16. Hobbes 1852, 48.
17. See, for instance, Fitch 1811.
18. Foucault 1994 (1966), 132–133, 137.
19. Archer 1980, 223–224. Mahajan 1983, 134.
20. Arnold 2006, 24.
21. Hodges 1999 (1794), iv.
22. Archer 1979, 9.
23. De Almeida and Gilpin 2005, 191.

24. Hardie and Clayton 1932, 46.
25. Gilpin 1792, 3–7, 43.
26. Gilpin 1792, 31.
27. Mahajan 1983, 131.
28. Gilpin 1792, 8, 45.
29. Archer 1980, 225–226.
30. Gilpin 1792, 26.
31. Gilpin 1792, 44–45.
32. Graves 1905, 244.
33. Mahajan 1983, 129–131.
34. Hodges 1999 (1794), 154.
35. Daniell and Daniell 1816, 31.
36. Losty 2005.
37. Press List 1910, volume 12, 162.
38. Hardie and Clayton 1932, 46, 51.
39. Quilley 2004, 170.
40. Shellim 1979, 54.
41. Daniell and Daniell 1816, 29, 31.
42. Archer 1980, 130–131.
43. I am indebted to Jerry Losty for this insight.
44. Archer 1980, 126, 128–129.
45. Archer 1980, 71.
46. Daniell and Daniell 1816, 30.
47. Martinelli and Michell 1998, 59.
48. Losty 2005.
49. Mahajan 1983, 129–131.
50. Banerjee 1974, 501.
51. Shellim 1979, 9.
52. Cotton 1933, 133.
53. Mahajan 1983, 134.
54. De Almeida and Gilpin 2005, 191.
55. Shellim 1979, 9.
56. Mahajan 1983, 134.
57. Oldham 1925, vi.
58. Moxham 2004, 43–44.
59. Lee 1899, 388.
60. Hodges 1793, iii–iv.
61. Letter from M. Gilmore, Officiating Collector, Shahabad, to E. C. Ravenshaw, Commissioner of Revenue for the Patna Division. No. 113, August 10, 1839. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1839. Volume 150. BSA.
62. O'Malley 2005 (1924), 156.
63. Twining 1893, 150.
64. I am indebted to Philip Wagoner for this suggestion.
65. Twining 1893, 150.
66. Hunter 1894, 220, 225, 234.

67. Singh 1987, 50.
68. Ray 1938, MSS EUR F256/2. December 5. OIOC.
69. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for July 8. OIOC.
70. Twining 1893, 150.
71. Kolff 1990, 160, 181.
72. Twining 1893, 147.
73. Katten 2005, 68.
74. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for July 14. OIOC.
75. Ray 1939, MSS EUR F256/2. Entry for December 8. OIOC.
76. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for June 30. OIOC.
77. Ray 1939, MSS EUR F256/2. Entry for December 5. OIOC.
78. Dyson 2002 (1978), 24–25.
79. Oman 1908, 72.
80. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for August 4. OIOC.
81. Twining 1893, 150.
82. Twining 1893, 150–152.
83. Twining 1893, 136.
84. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for April 21. OIOC.
85. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for Janurary 13. OIOC.
86. Twining 1893, 114.
87. Twining 1893, 141, 212.
88. Twining 1893, 154.
89. Twining 1893, 332.
90. Ray 1939, MSS EUR F256/2. Entry for December 27. OIOC.
91. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for July 14. OIOC.
92. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entry for February 19. OIOC.
93. Village Notes: Chainpur Pargana, Bhabhua Thana, Shahabad District. 1915. No. 310, Village Chainpur. 181–185. BDRA.
94. Confidential report from R. M. S. Ferguson to T. A. Daff. No. 156 S. September 29, 1928. Political Special. File no. 217 of 1928. BSA.
95. W. B. Heycock, extract from D.O. no. 498/C, September 27, 1928 (fortnightly report). Political Special. File no. 217 of 1928. BSA.
96. Ray 1940, MSS EUR F256/3. Entries for January 13; February 16, 21, 23; March 11; July 14. OIOC.
97. Chowdhari 1917, 120.
98. Bayly 1996, 118.
99. Minute of the governor general dated February 24, 1800. Home Department, Public no. 1. March 14, 1800. 907–8, O.C. OIOC.
100. Kaye 1937, 585. Vicziany 1986, 627–628.
101. I thank Phil Hopkins for this observation.
102. Buchanan 1926, v.
103. Oldham 1925, iii.
104. Scholberg 1970, 1.
105. Martin 1838, volume III. iii.
106. Letter from E. de Lautour, Collector of Shahabad, to the Commissioner Revenue, Patna Division. No. 306, July 29, 1853. Patna Commissioner's Records, 1853. Volume 167. BSA.

107. Kaye 1937, 607.

108. See Pinch 1996, 30–45, for an analysis of Buchanan's depiction of Hindus, particularly monks.

109. A discrepancy exists between the spelling of the author's name on the title page (Ramgopal Singh Chowdhari) and below his picture opposite of the work's first page (Ram Gopal Singh Chaudhari). I opt to use the former.

110. Chowdhari 1917, a.

111. Yang 1998, 115.

112. Bakshi and Chaturvedi 2007, 108.

113. Thornton 1854, 258–259, 393.

114. Thornton 1993 (1857), no page number.

115. Markham 2004 (1878), 381.

116. *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1909–1931, 1:iii.

117. Thornton 1854, 219.

118. Hunter 1877, 212–214.

119. Vicziany 1986, 645–646.

120. Although Buchanan seemingly does not allow his Christian commitments to intrude in his Shahabad account, they could be glimpsed elsewhere, as in his *Genealogies* where, for example, he refuted claims that conflated a Hindu figure (Swayambhuva) with a biblical one (Noah). Hamilton 1819, 6.

121. Hamilton 1819, frontispiece, 4.

122. Buchanan 1926, 26, 31.

123. Hamilton 1926, 28, 53, 119.

124. Buchanan 1986b (1934), 160.

125. *Buchanan Hamilton Drawings. Vol. II. Costumes of Behar.* Collection of colored drawings. MSS Eur C 14. OIOC.

126. Buchanan 1986b (1934), 178, 179.

127. Chowdhari 1917, 5.

128. Chowdhari 1917, 25.

129. Robb 1992, 326–327.

130. O'Malley 1925, 568–572.

131. Political Department, Special Section. File 200 of 1917. BSA.

132. Buchanan 1986b (1934), 132–139.

133. Yang 1998, 115.

134. Wheeler 1869, xix.

135. Pillai 1897, 57–61.

136. Chunder 1869, 41.

137. Wheeler 1869, xi–xii.

138. Wheeler 1869, xvii–xviii.

139. Wheeler 1869, xii.

140. Wheeler 1869, xii.

141. Buchanan 1986b (1934), 182.

142. Hamilton 1819a, 1.

143. Francis Buchanan. *Drawings.* Vol. II.—*Figures and Drawings*. Unpublished collection of drawings. MSS Eur D 95. OIOC.

144. Said 1978, 308.

THIRD THEORETICAL INTERLUDE

1. Dear 2006, 44–48.
2. Borges 1988 (1964), 103.
3. Bailey 1994, 1.
4. Bailey 1994, 2.
5. Bailey 1994, 3.
6. Bailey 1994, 1.
7. Lecointre and Le Guyader 2006, 11–12.
8. Boorstin 1983, 434.
9. Boorstin 1983, 434–442.
10. Vicziany 1986, 637–639.
11. Prain 1905, vi.
12. Hamilton 1822, v.
13. Prain 1905, xxiv.
14. Buchanan. Manuscript.
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CHAPTER 5

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55. Chowdhari 1917, 120.
56. Roy 1932, 353–381.
57. Trautmann 1997, 3.
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## CHAPTER 7

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## CHAPTER 8

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## CONCLUSION

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2. Tallents 1923a, 233.

3. Bates 1997, 219.

4. Bayly 1996, 372.

5. Joshi, Srinivas, and Bajaj 2005, xxv–10.

6. Joshi, Srinivas, and Bajaj 2005, xiii–xviii, 6.

7. For a compelling consideration of the assumptions of and possibilities for this situation, see Mandair 2009.

8. Ahmad 1973, 136–140.

## APPENDIX A

1. Buchanan 1986a (1934), i–iv.

## APPENDIX B

1. 1872: H. Beverley, 1872, p. iv; 1881: Letter from C. Bernard, Officiation Secretary to the Government of India, to all Local Governments for Central India and Rajputna. No. 1/12 C, Fort William, March 29. NAI; 1880. Home Department. Public Nos. 157–187. March 1880. NAI; 1891:

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### APPENDIX C

1. "Distribution List of Home Department Resolution No. 3219–3232, dated the 23rd May 1901, regarding the Ethnological Survey of India." Home Department. Public Nos. 122–133 (Part A). November 1901. NAI.

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|---|---|
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| BSA | Bihar State Archives, Patna |
| CL | Census Library, New Delhi |
| CMSA | Church Missionary Society Archive |
| NAI | The National Archive of India, New Delhi |
| OIOC | The Oriental and India Office Collection, The British Library, London |

## PUBLISHED SOURCES PREDATING 1947

### *Serials*

| | |
|---|---|
| *CR* | *Calcutta Review* |
| *JASB* | *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* |
| *JBORS* | *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* |
| *JBRS* | *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* |

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Please note that descriptions are provided for early modern and modern historical figures only. Diacritics are provided for indigenous terms, but not names. In order to maintain a level of accessibility, I have not included diacritics in the main text. Those wishing transliterated versions of the terms used can find these below and in the glossary.

Pages with illustrations are in **bold**.


*Abbreviations*
ASB Asiatic Society of Bengal
ASI Archaeological Survey of India
CMS Church Missionary Society
EIC East India Company
ICS Indian Civil Service
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